This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

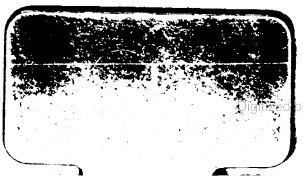
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

230.1 STACK
N.79



Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

92 Not Tom

S. MARY THE VIRGIN,

FREELAND.

PAROCHIAL LENDING LIBRARY.

RULES.

1. Any parishioner not under thirteen years of age* can have not more than one book at a time to read.

2. Books may be taken out and brought back to the School House any Monday evening between six and half-past.

3. No book may be kept out more than a fortnight; and any loss or damage must be made good by the person who borrows the book.

* N.B. Special exceptions may be made in favour of school children in the first class.

302079134T

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

NARRATIVE

OF A

TWO YEARS' RESIDENCE

AT

NINEVEH,

AND TRAVELS IN

MESOPOTAMIA, ASSYRIA, AND SYRIA;

BY

THE REV. J. P. FLETCHER.

"Thy shepherds slumber, O King of Assyria: thy nobles shall dwell in the dust; thy people is scattered upon the mountains, and no man gathereth them." NAHUM iii. 18.

Second Edition.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,

13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1850.

Digitized by Google

LONDON:
PRINTED BY HARRISON AND SON,
ST. MARTIN'S LANE.

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

Page

The Osmanli. Influence of Mohammedanism. Turkish Civilization. State of the Law. Difference of the Races inhabiting Turkey. General Remarks . . . 1

CHAPTER II.

A Syrian Catholic Church. Journey to Arbela. Alexander and Darius. Arbela. The Jew. The Christians of Shucklawa. Return to Mosul 28

CHAPTER III.

Journey to Nimroud. The Sabre. The Priest's Tale . 55

CHAPTER IV.

Tell-Nimroud. Monastery of Mar Behnam. Khoorsabad 73

CHAPTER V.

Remarks on Assyrian History 89

CHAPTER VI

Remarks on the Ecclesiastical History of the Chaldeans . 115

CHAPTER VII.

Remarks on the Ecclesiastical History of the Chaldeans . 138

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VIII.

Page
Remarks on the Ecclesiastical History of the Chaldeans . 156

CHAPTER IX.

The Magician. The Mollah. Kas Botros' Tale. Bishop Matti. General Observations 180

CHAPTER X.

Remarks on the Syrian Jacobites 200

CHAPTER XI.

Departure from Mosul. Halt of a Caravan. Giorgio. Sinjar, and its ancient Associations. Ruins of Dara. The Delli Ali. False Alarm. Mode of Escaping from Arabs 221

CHAPTER XII.

Diarbekir. Chaldean Ladies. Mar Athanasius. Italian Doctor. Remains. Inscriptions. Holy Fish . 250

CHAPTER XIII.

Urfah. Mochdesseh Yeshua. A Bedouin. Syrian Observances. Church of St. Thaddeus. Bir. Passage of the Euphrates. Aleppo. English Merchants. An Austrian Consul 277

CHAPTER XIV.

Journey from Aleppo. Antioch. Latakia. Conclusion . 304

Digitized by Google

NOTES FROM NINEVEH.

CHAPTER I.

The Osmanli. Influence of Mohammedanism. Turkish Civilization. State of the Law. Difference of the Races inhabiting Turkey. General Remarks.

One thousand years have nearly elapsed, since a horde of wandering Sarmatians issued from the plains of Tartary and formed settlements to the north of Bokhara, in a region which still retains the appellation of Turkistan. A few scattered and wandering tribes maintain to the present day the name of Turkoman, and the nomadic habits of their progenitors. With their dark-coloured tents, and their numerous flocks, they roam through the fairest portions of Western Asia, and preserve intact, in their habits and usages, the simplicity of pastoral

Digitized by Google

life. But, at the commencement of the eleventh century, the majority of the Turcomans had quitted the mild and peaceful pursuits of their fathers, for the more brilliant attractions of mercenary warfare. Under the banners of the house of Abbas, they had rendered valuable service, in the Persian war, and the grateful Caliphs assigned their faithful tributaries some of the fairest portions of the conquered soil.

The new colony were no sooner settled in their foreign abode, than they embraced with ready complacency the creed of their Arab masters. Their previous religious notions resembled the confused and unintelligible superstitions of those rude and barbarous tribes who inhabit the wilds of Asiatic Russia. They professed a belief in one Supreme Being, but they offered him neither homage nor prayers. In the times of calamity or distress, they relied on the intercession of certain priests or enchanters, who undertook, for a specific sum, to remove the misfortunes or the diseases of their votaries. The Tartar races have generally been noted for their indifference to particular forms of religious truth, and the Mohammedan Mollahs, who set forth the doctrines of Islam, in the name of the Prophet's vicar, found probably little reason to complain of their new disciples.

Digitized by Google

The Persian settlement soon attracted fresh bodies of the Turcomans, who abandoned their wild and wandering mode of life and barbarous superstitions, for the benefits of semi-civilization and the system of Mohammed. Thus reinforced, the original settlers became strong enough to dispute the empire of Asia with their former sovereigns, and, in A.D. 1055, Togrul Bey, of the Turcoman family of Salguez, made himself master of Baghdad; while other chiefs of his nation carried their conquests into Asia Minor and India.

In A.D. 1065, the Lieutenants of the Turkish Prince Gelaleddin, drove the Saracens from Syria, and possessed themselves of the Holy City, where they committed the most fearful atrocities, and aroused against the professors of the Mohammedan faith, the indignation of Christian Europe. The Crusades followed, and for a time we lose sight of the Turcomans, whose savage prowess was eclipsed by the conquests of Saladdin. A few centuries later, we behold them the lords of Asia Minor, and the masters of Constantinople.

From the period of the subversion of the Greek Empire, the power of the Turks began gradually to decline. Foiled in their attempts against Europe, the Ottoman Sultans were soon obliged to confine

Digitized by Google

themselves to the boundaries of their conquered dominions. Yet even here they possessed a scope wide enough to gratify the most insatiable ambition. The fertile regions of Greece and Asia Minor were theirs, and the fruitful plains of Assyria and Mesopotamia yielded to their Lieutenants a produce, which in earlier days had been the support of two mighty empires. The islands of Rhodes and Cyprus obeyed their authority, while Egypt and the coast of Africa paid them at least a nominal obedience. Wise and politic measures, introduced by a sagacious and far-sighted Government, might have rendered Turkey the first empire in the world.

But the great princes of the Ottoman race were mere conquerors, who had no talent for legislation. They abandoned their tributaries to the tyranny of Pashas, who used their unlimited authority for the purpose of amassing wealth. The Porte, indeed, exercised a species of retributive justice, which, however, tended to increase the evil it was designed to remedy. The plundered and desolated province found that its tyrant was removed, and his wealth confiscated; but his ill-gotten gains were not made use of to repair the wrongs which he had inflicted. The whole property of the deposed or strangled Pasha went to swell the treasury of his Sovereign,

Digitized by Google

while, in many instances, the sacrifice of a large sum procured for a politic offender both indemnity and impunity. Some of the governors of provinces acquired influence enough to defy the authority of the Sultan; and the dangerous alternative of private assassination was substituted for a legal trial and execution.

Yet the greatest hindrance to civilization was probably to be sought for in the unchanging character of the Mohammedan system. That system was not merely a series of doctrines purely theological, which formed a state creed, but it was the political and civil code of the country. The crude notions and shadowy theories of the obscure merchant of Mecca, were made the standard by which all measures were to be tested. As long as they adhered faithfully to such a system, the Sultans of Turkey were bound to be constantly at war with their Christian neighbours, and to impose upon all conquered States the alternative of the Koran or the sword. They could scarcely tolerate, much less reward, the ingenuity or ability of their Christian subjects. They dared hardly, indeed, protect the latter from pillage and injustice, since the Doctors of their Law had declared that in a suit between a Christian and a Mohammedan, the oath of the former was not valid.

Digitized by Google

Moreover, the system of the Koran waged war against art of every description, and considered science, with its experiments, as another name for magic. The superstitious dread of an ignorant populace was easily excited, and the unfortunate innovator might atone for his ingenuity with his life. The aid of Europeans was, for a time, rejected with disdain, and thus, while Europe was advancing in civilization, Turkey retained at the commencement of the nineteenth century, the habits and institutions of the thirteenth. Yet, with all this apparent and external fidelity to the precepts of the Arabian lawgiver, a great and vital change was slowly operating internally.

The first ancestors of the Turcomans who embraced the creed of Islam, received probably the teaching of its Mollahs with a mingled feeling of curiosity and indifference. But their descendants imbibed with more devotion and zeal the dogmas of a system, which was at once attractive to sensuality, and fostered the love of enterprise. The Turkish warrior, aided, as he imagined, by supernatural power, fought with redoubled fury against those whom he considered the enemies of God. If he vanquished, and remained alive to enjoy the fruits of his victory, the persons of his captives were at his

Digitized by Google

disposal, and their ransom or their sale in the slave-market of Constantinople, produced an addition to the ordinary booty of a victor.

He believed himself to be performing not merely a political, but a religious duty, when he charged the squadrons of the Christians, and anticipated besides the rewards of successful warfare, an increase of felicity in the paradise of Allah. If he fell in conflict with the enemies of Islam, his instructors had taught him to expect the celestial glories of martyrdom, and the embraces of the Houries in the ever verdant gardens of the blessed on high. Nor was he at liberty to avoid, or to arrest the stroke of destiny. His cowardice, or unwillingness to meet danger, would make little difference as to his final fate. All the actions of his life had been decreed before his birth, and the hand of Allah could secure him uninjured, when surrounded by foes; or terminate his career in the midst of apparent safety and tranquillity.

The courage of the Moslem, therefore, was a necessary deduction from his creed, but it ceased to animate him when his faith in that creed was shaken or impaired. The adherent of Islam ceased to conquer, when he ceased to believe.

Moreover, the system of Mohammed is one that

Digitized by Google

does not depend, like Christianity, on its own inherent truth for support. The doctrines of the prophet of Mecca, are the notions of a fanatical and successful warrior. They allure in the excitement of conflict, or in the bustle of a campaign, but they are not suited for a season of peace and tranquillity. The glories of Islam are only to be sustained at the point of the sword, and the votary who pauses for a moment in his intoxicating career of victory, to examine critically the articles of his faith, will soon find that the result will be scepticism or indifference.

Nor must it be forgotten that a system like Mohammedanism, can only be sustained by constant and unremitting success. The moment reverses are encountered, the Moslem combatant must question in some degree, the correctness of the supposition that he is the exclusive favourite of Heaven. The fanatical peasant of the interior still believes that his great Sultan is paramount over all nations, and that the kings of Europe are his tributaries. Deprive him of this belief, convince him of the superiority of the Franks, and the charm is broken, the illusion destroyed. He slowly awakes to the reality that his creed is not necessarily the same victorious, and heaven-sent system which it has

Digitized by Google

hitherto been represented, and the tenet of predestination inculcated by it, induces in the place of desperate and superhuman courage, a sullen and helpless submission to what is considered the will of Allah.

The European reverses of the Turks may be considered, perhaps, as the first step in the decline of Islam, but their acquaintance with the rising nations of Christendom may be ranked as a more dangerous blow to its power. It became every day more evident, that while Christian States were growing annually more powerful, the true believer was sinking fast in the scale of nations. Vanquished in turn by Russia and Austria, he was only enabled to hold his ground by means of the dissensions among European powers. The French Revolution broke out, and the apostles of infidelity disseminated, even in the Turkish capital, their theories of liberty and equality. A modern Tamerlane conquered Egypt, and occupied Syria; and Mohammedan pride was humbled and debased by the consideration that the invaders of Africa and Spain, were now doomed to be invaded with impunity. A few more years of uccess might have enabled Nap oleon to abolish the Ottoman line, and to emulate the Asiatic conquests of Alexander; but his downfall secured for the effete

Digitized by Google

and tottering dynasty a brief respite from their inevitable fate.

Sultan Mahmoud was a prince of some talent, and greater ambition, but his judgment was not sufficiently solid to enable him to discharge the functions of a reformer. He was sensible of Frank superiority, and by no means blind to the obstacles which Mohammedanism placed in his way, but he fell into the mistake of supposing that the one could be attained by the adoption of European tactics, and an European costume, and the other overcome by diminishing the public faith in the national religion, while he was yet unprovided with any substitute for it. A wiser and more cautious mind would have seen that the civilization of a country, or of a race, can only prove successful when it is a development of what is good and valuable in earlier institutions. A true reformer must carefully collect, and segregate the good of former ages, and by amplifying and encouraging the influence which it already possesses, he must make it in time overpower and nullify what is bad and barbarous in the national institutions.

But the Sultan did exactly the reverse of all this. He seized with an eager and ill-judging haste upon foreign institutions, and sought to make them part

Digitized by Google

and parcel of a system, entirely opposed in its character to the usages of the western world. The prejudices of his subjects were shocked by what they considered the indelicacy of the Frank costume, but Mahmoud disregarded their scruples to a degree which would not have been ventured on by Amurath or Murad. The professor of a picture-hating creed, he presented his portrait with great solemnity to his troops, and caused the idol (as a conscientious Mohammedan must have termed and considered it) to be saluted with imperial honours. His love of wine had been common to many of his predecessors, but few had displayed their indulgence in the forbidden liquid with such utter recklessness and contempt for public opinion.

Still, however, Mohammedanism continued the religion of the State, and the Sultan had even invoked its aid, when he unfurled the sacred banner of the prophet, and called upon all true believers to march under its folds against the rebellious Janissaries. But the life and energy of the system, which once awoke the warlike and courageous of Asia to deeds of the most chivalrous valour, had long ago been suffered to fall into decay.

The establishment of the Nizam Djedeed, or new soldiers, completed the ruin of Mohammedanism as a

Digitized by Google

political system. It was tantamount to a declaration that the tactics and evolutions of Infidel Europe were far superior to the valour inspired by the words of the prophet; and the continual employment of Christians in the highest and most responsible grades, was in direct defiance to the traditions of centuries, which restricted the profession of arms to the Moslem alone.

Thus, at the close of Mahmoud's reign a complete change had passed over Turkish affairs. In lieu of the costly and flowing robes of former days, the Pashas and the Government officials appeared in European uniforms, which sat awkwardly upon them, and produced, sometimes, actions perfectly ludicrous in the eyes of a Frank. Pictures decorated the habitations of Mohammedans, dissection was introduced into the hospitals, much to the horror of the Ulemah, and newspapers were established to form an unnatural coalition between the new improvements and the Mohammedan religion.

The tidings of Turkey's advances in civilization brought a number of adventurers from different parts of Europe, to aid in and assist the good work. Those persons, of whom their respective countries had grown weary, or who having nothing to lose, thought they must be certain to gain something

Digitized by Google

from the ignorance of the Turks, flocked in numbers to the ill-fated shores of Islam. The Polish wanderer, whose begging epistles and fictitious misfortunes were known to half the police of civilized Europe, the Italian patriot or assassin, the French apostle of Socialism and Communism, with all the scum and refuse of Europe, poured themselves in shoals upon the unfortunate Ottomans, and for a time succeeded in imposing on their credulity.

Quacks abounded in every part of Turkey, whose drugs and lancets destroyed more annually than the steel of their crusading ancestors. Drill sergeants, cavalry instructors, ship builders, and all who could minister to the newly awakened zeal for reform, repaired to the Turkish dominions. The late arrivals pretended not to strictness of manners or of morals. Some turned Mohammedans that they might enjoy the privileges of polygamy; others preserved the name of Christian, only to render it contemptible by their vices. Drunkenness and debauchery followed in the footsteps of these European reformers, and their conduct became so thoroughly vile and despicable that the Turks themselves recoiled in horror from the society of these specimens of civilization. It was observed that, in proportion as a town increased in its foreign inha-

Digitized by Google

bitants, it increased in vice; and the Osmanli of the old school alluded triumphantly to this fact, as an evidence of the evil fruits of infidel civilization.

The young Pashas, and the sons of the more respectable Turkish families who shared the festivities of Mahmoud, gave their full support and co-operation to his projects of reform. The study of French, of Italian, and even of English, became fashionable, and the members of young Turkey imbibed with assiduity the lessons of civilization from the novels and newspapers of Europe. The thin veil of conformity to the external rites of their religion, was by degrees laid aside; and, while the Turk of the old school observed punctiliously the stated hours of prayer, even in the midst of the most crowded saloon, the reforming Osmanlis retired from view, and seemed ashamed of owning that they performed their devotions at all.

A neglect of the external precepts of their religion, was followed by marked disobedience to its moral injunctions, and the profligacy and sensuality of the new school, far exceeded the more regulated debauchery of earlier times. The prevalent dissoluteness has produced cruelty and indifference to the feelings of others, and it is said that the unhappy victims of the slave markets dread nothing so much

Digitized by Google

as to be purchased by a Frank resident, or by one of the reforming school.

Bribery and corruption have been inherent vices in Eastern courts since the earliest times. We find in Scripture frequent allusions to the injustice of judges, and to the practice of biasing the course of justice by gifts. At the present day, there is scarcely a single case brought before the Cadis, in which both plaintiff and defendant are not made to pay largely for the administration of the law. All decisions are drawn from the Koran, but, when its text is embarrassed and obscure, reference is made to the works of the Commentators. If these fail to render the required information, the judge places the Koran respectfully on his head, and gives such a decision as he deems most in accordance with the rules of justice. Sometimes wills of a strange and eccentric character, elicit the subtilty and ingenuity of the judicial mind. One of these appears singular enough to deserve insertion here.

A certain merchant left in his last testament seventeen horses to be divided among his three sons, according to the following proportion:—The first was to receive half, the second one third, and the youngest a ninth part of the whole. But, when they came to arrange about the division, it was

Digitized by Google

found that, to comply with the terms of the will, without sacrificing one or more of the animals, was impossible. Puzzled in the extreme, they repaired to the Cadi, who, having read the will, observed that such a difficult question required time for deliberation, and commanded them to return after two days.

When they again made their appearance, the Judge said, "I have considered carefully your case, and I find that I can make such a division of the seventeen horses among you, as will give each more than his strict share, and yet not one of the animals shall be injured. Are you content?"

"We are, O Judge," was the reply.

"Bring forth the seventeen horses and let them be placed in the court," said the Cadi.

The animals were brought, and the Judge ordered his groom to place his own horse with them. He bade the eldest brother count the horses.

"They are eighteen in number, O Judge," he said.

"I will now make the division," observed the Cadi. "You, the eldest, are entitled to half; take then nine of the horses. You, the second son, are to receive one third; take, therefore six; while to you, the youngest, belongs the ninth part, namely, two. Thus, the seventeen horses are divided among

Digitized by Google

you; you have each more than your share, and I may now take my own steed back again."

"Mashallah!" exclaimed the brothers, with delight, "O Cadi, your wisdom equals that of our Lord, Suleiman Ibn Daood."

Few travellers can have journeyed for any distance in Asiatic Turkey, without having been struck with the number of ruined villages, which one encounters everywhere. Even in the great towns and cities, the quantity of houses, either wholly or partially in ruins is very great. Diarbekir, Mardin, Nisibis, and Mosul, were large and flourishing cities about four centuries ago. The two former, and the latter, have very few houses that are not in some degree in a dilapidated state, while the whole of ancient Nisibis, which Abulfeda describes as an extensive and populous town, in his time, has entirely disappeared from its site, and a few mud huts bear the name of one of the most powerful cities of former days.

This fact marks the great and gradual diminution which has taken place in the numbers of the population since the conquest of these countries by the Turks. It must be borne in mind also, that no new cities or towns have arisen to supply the places of those which have been, and are thus rapidly sinking to decay. Should the decrease in the population go

Digitized by Google

on in the same ratio, the close of the next three hundred years will find the whole of Mesopotamia and Assyria in as desolate a condition as the mounds of Nineveh. Vast and uncultivated solitudes will occupy the sites of some of the largest and most celebrated cities of Asiatic Turkey.

The Ottoman dominions are inhabited by different races, who, separated from each other by various prejudices, agree in a common hatred of the Osmanlis. The Kurds and Arabs, although sincere, if not bigoted followers of the creed of Islam, entertain a greater aversion to the Turks than to the Christians. The latter are divided among themselves, but lack only union to make them formidable opponents of the Turkish rule. Thus the enmity which exists between the several heterogenous materials of which the Sultan's dominions are composed, alone prevents their combining against the common enemy. Yet the same cause proves also an insurmountable obstacle in the way of reform.

The fear of increasing the power of one portion, or of exciting the prejudices of another part of their subjects, leads Turkish statesmen to prefer a stagnant calm to the necessary agitation which projects of useful reform could not fail of producing. An attempt to limit the authority of the Pashas might in-

Digitized by Google

duce these governors to form projects of independent sovereignty, which would be certain to find support from some at least of the discontented. A chief who could stir up the old Moslem fanaticism, either of the Kurds or Arabs, might succeed in detaching from the Sultan's dominions many considerable districts of the present Turkish empire. Should the Roman Church be able to unite in one, the various Christian sects, a second Peter the Hermit might rouse the warlike inhabitants of Mount Lebanon and Kurdistan, to undertake another Crusade. The powers of Europe could scarcely with decency refuse their aid to an enslaved population of Christians struggling to be free.

Yet, notwithstanding all the oppression, tyranny, and stupidity which characterize the Ottoman rule, the individual Turk is far from participating in the vices of his superiors and of his government. He is not naturally cruel nor avaricious, he is a lover of his children, and by no means an unkind husband. If the customs or prejudices of his country, and the ignorance and childishness of Oriental females, prevent his treating his wife in the European style, she is seldom the victim of brutality. Our English notions respecting Polygamy, female slavery, and unfortunate wives sown up for the least trifle in a

Digitized by Google

sackful of snakes, are somewhat exaggerated. Fiend-like acts of cruelty do occur occasionally, but they emanate from the Pashas and men in power, who have frequently little of the pure Osmanli blood in their veins. They are generally the sons or the descendants of slaves, or of Georgian adventurers who have embraced Islam.

The genuine Osmanli hates the trouble and fatigue of power, he loves to spend his days on a carpet engaged in contemplation, and inhaling the fumes of his chibouque. He is not sanguinary, except when violently excited, and then he becomes a tiger. He is charitable to excess, and a strict observer of the good as well as of the evil precepts of El Islam. He is child-like in his simplicity, and loves the amusements of a child. Yet, when once his courage is stirred up, and his blood on fire, he will fight like a Spartan. In the field, he has always shown himself the true descendant of the conquerors of Asia.

Yet, the Turk is conscious that his empire is waning, and his day of dominion passing away. On his countenance sits the shade of mute and dignified resignation, as he observes with a sigh, that the Ottoman rule is drawing near its close. His favourite tenet of predestination, however, serves to soothe the disappointed feelings which are provoked by

Digitized by Google

national vanity. The hand of Allah is working the decay of his people, and it is no degradation to be vanquished by Him who is All Powerful. With an earnestness of faith, which it is impossible not to admire, the Turk sees the working of Providence in his day of downfall, as much as in his hour of success. He only regrets that his rulers have not suffered his nation to fall with dignity, but have sought to uphold her by arts and customs borrowed from the Franks, which innovations he views with a mixture of hatred and contempt. The true Osmanli would rather meet his fate with the scimitar of his fathers in his hand, than be indebted to the Franks for instruction in warfare, only to be more completely vanquished by them at last.

The religion of the Turk is more an affair of feeling, of policy, and of ancestral pride, than of intellectual conviction. He does not study it like the Arab, nor does he share the blind bigotry of the Kurd. He reveres its morality, and conforms strictly to its ritual, but he cannot argue in its favour. Perhaps one of his chief objections against abandoning it, would be the recollection that, under its standard his fathers so often marched to victory. But the Osmanli of the present day has little animosity to Christianity as a spiritual creed. He will

Digitized by Google

read with delight the moral lessons of the Gospel, and treats with the deepest respect the names of Jesus and Mary.

Under a good government, and enlightened by Christianity, there can be little doubt but that the Osmanli race might be greatly improved. They are honest, moral, and courageous. Their faults proceed from the workings of a depraved and corrupt system of tyranny, based on the absurdities of a false and contradictory creed. In order, therefore, to improve or to exalt the Turks as a nation, Mohammedanism must be destroyed. It is not merely a religious, but a political system. It is entwined with the whole fabric of Turkish law. Every act of reform is a blow inflicted upon it. Some have thought that it may be modified or adapted to new measures, or confined to the limited sphere of a mere moral code. But all acquainted with the character of Islam, must be aware that it cannot be reduced to the level of a series of philosophical or religious dogmas. Its motto must always be "aut Cæsar, aut nullus."

To assert that part of an inspired code is false or erroneous, is to infer the falsehood of the whole. If the prophet erred, and deceived mankind as to his political regulations, might not his revelations affecting ritual and morals be equally untrue? The

Digitized by Google

Impostor of Mecca legislated for a small community, and for a barbarous age: he could not foresee the extension of his system, or the causes which would lead to its ultimate decay and ruin. He aspired to teach men, not only religion, but politics and civil law. He would fain have been a second Moses, but he forgot that the object of the Mosaic regulations confined them to a single nation, and to a certain limited period. But it is the fault of all false systems, to grow obsolete in the course of time. The divine origin of Christianity is best proved by its elasticity—by its power of combination with every varied form of political authority. He who could foresee the changes which would take place in the governments of this world, and adapt his system to meet every exigency, must have been more than man.

There are, at present, however, many difficulties in the way of the abolition of Mahommedanism. According to Turkish law, a convert to Christianity would suffer capital punishment, and the dread of this might operate as an obstacle in the way of any missionary efforts. The Christians of the East require themselves instruction and enlightenment, while, from the long period of slavery and degradation which they have sustained, they would be ill

Digitized by Google

suited to communicate a knowledge of the Gospel to the haughty Osmanli. The latter would look coldly on the mysterious dogmas and bare ritual of either American or Dissenting Protestantism; nor perhaps might the worship of the Church of England be sufficiently showy and symbolical to attract an Eastern mind.

The Roman Church would, perhaps, have more advantages and attractions, but the veneration of pictures and images must come in contact with the Hebrew element, which appears so conspicuously in all modern Oriental forms of religion. Perhaps, however, the Turks could be induced to receive the teaching of the Gospel, and embody it in a church system of their own. This would be more successful than the attempt to force upon them any of the rituals of Europe.

There remains a most important question for the politicians of our age to decide, and that is "What shall be done with Turkey?" It is impossible that she can continue in her present state for many years longer. To attempt to introduce reforms while the Mohammedan religion is dominant, will result in nothing but disappointment. On the other hand, the question of partition is attended with many practical difficulties. The jealousy of the great powers

Digitized by Google

must always hold each other in check; and extensive colonization, on the part of either, would be viewed with suspicion, and excite, it may be, serious opposition from the rest.

A Christian kingdom could hardly be formed in the present divided condition of Oriental Christendom; and it could not be maintained without foreign aid. Nor has the experiment tried in the case of Greece, produced such results as would encourage politicians to repeat it in Asia. Union among the Christians might lead to something, but this union could only be effected, humanly speaking, under the auspices of the Church of Rome; and then French influence would be predominant.

Yet, something must be done, and the sooner active measures are taken to arrest the progress of decay and desolation, the better. My own experience of the Turkish character, would lead to the conclusion that the abolition of Mohammedanism, and the introduction of Christianity among them, might yet operate favourably on the destinies of the Osmanli race. European influence could easily obtain the repeal of the barbarous and inhuman statute which fetters the liberty of conscience, and the Turks, freed from the shackles imposed by the creed of the false prophet, would be at liberty to

Digitized by Google

adopt and to carry out measures of wholesome reform. The manly and common sense features of the race would be allowed free scope, and the educated and enlightened Osmanli, might yet occupy no mean position among the nations of the earth.

Our prejudices against the cruelties, barbarities, and perfidy which has characterized the government, must not blind our eyes to the virtues of the individuals who suffer from them. The Turk has been the victim of a bad political system, and of a sensual nd immoral creed; yet honesty and morality have not entirely forsaken him. Placed by the side of the false, treacherous, and deceitful Greek, he shows to advantage, even by the confession of the most prejudiced of travellers. His vices are the vices of his education,—his good qualities are his own.

Whatever may be the difficulties which beset the arrangement of the eastern question, it is to be hoped that the present state of stagnation and decay may speedily be put an end to, and that we may see once more the blessings of civilization and true religion extending themselves over the fairest and most fertile regions of the habitable world. The knowledge that thousands of oppressed and miserable beings are turning their eyes towards their European brethren for succour and deliverance, should awaken in our

Digitized by Google

hearts the emotions of sympathizing humanity, and induce us to do our utmost to procure for them such assistance as may relieve them from their present state of destructive inaction and ruinous decay.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II.

A Syrian Catholic Church. Journey to Arbela. Alexander and Darius. Arbela. The Jew. The Christians of Shucklawa. Return to Mosul.

THE longer I resided at Mosul, the more intimate I became with different individuals among its Mohammedan and Christian inhabitants. The Orientals require very few of those ceremonies of introduction, which are considered so important by Englishmen in every part of the globe. Leave to enter a house, a seat on the diwan, a pipe, and coffee may easily be obtained by the merest stranger in an eastern town who understands the manners and language of the country. Some reserve is practised by Mohammedans, who rarely cultivate the society of Christians, but this coolness, which is founded

Digitized by Google

entirely on religious prejudice, is rapidly dying away.

The nature of my mission to Mosul rendered it desirable that I should study both the tenets and the ceremonies of the eastern churches. Their Sunday service usually commenced at six o'clock in the morning, so that I had frequent opportunities of attending the celebration of their rites, as our own prayers did not begin till eleven o'clock.

On one occasion, a friend of mine, who was a Syrian Catholic priest and the rector of a church near to my abode, invited me to be present at the morning service. I went, accompanied by Toma, but found on arrival that Kas Yusef had made preparations for receiving me which did not exactly accord with either my expectations or my tastes. I had anticipated a seat on the matting among the congregation, and, indeed, had already taken possession of a quiet corner, when a message from the priest arrived that I would "come up higher." Somewhat surprised, I followed the messenger, a deacon, behind the stone screen which divides the sanctuary from the choir. Beside the altar, was a large chair lined with tarnished velvet, in which, notwithstanding my protestations and remonstrances, I was almost forcibly installed. Neither priests nor deacons

Digitized by Google

would hear of my sitting crosslegged among the people.

"It is not your custom," said they; "we know that Franks cannot dispense with chairs; so sit down quietly, and Kas Yusef will show you the places, and Deacon Matthew shall stand by, to explain what is going on."

It was in vain I protested that I needed neither explanation nor aid, and even quietly hinted that the before-mentioned gentlemen might be much better employed; my friends would hear of no excuse. A large volume was pushed into my hands, Kas Yusef turned, from time to time, over the leaves, to point out the different places, while Deacon Matthew kept up a running commentary *sotto voce* in Arabic on the Syriac service. I received several fumigations with the incense, and after all was over, I made a vow that I would never again go in state, as it were, to an oriental church. Afterwards, I used to walk in without notice after the service had begun, and take my seat in some obscure corner, although many of my native friends, both clergy and laity, objected seriously to my proceedings as undignified.

The affairs of the Nestorians continued in an unsatisfactory and unsettled state, but an order was obtained from the Turkish Government that the

Digitized by Google

numerous captives should be set at liberty. This intelligence was received with no small degree of concern by those who had purchased any of the Nestorian prisoners, and some endeavoured to elude compliance by leaving Mosul and the vicinity with their late purchases. Every measure, however, that could be taken to prevent their departure was put in operation, and numerous slaves were in this manner rescued from a cruel and hopeless captivity.

One day, intelligence came that several captives had been removed to Arbil, the ancient Arbela, and as it was more than probable that the governor of that town might be bribed to connive at their being transported beyond the Turkish frontier, my friend B —— determined to go down there in person, and gained from me a willing consent to accompany him. We left home at about two o'clock in the afternoon, and after three hours ride reached Bagh Tolli, a large village of Syrians, direct east from Mosul. To the north-east of the village was a range of hills, at the foot of which is situated the monastery of Mar Daniel, mentioned frequently in the pages of Assemani. The ruins of four churches attest the former extent and populous condition of Bagh Tolli, but like all towns and villages of Asiatic Turkey, its inhabitants have very much diminished

Digitized by Google

in point of numbers. They were suffering also from internal dissensions, for nearly a fourth part of the families in the village had joined the Papal Syrians, a cicumstance which excited perpetual bickerings and ill-feeling.

At about five miles distance from Bagh Tolli, we came to the banks of the Hazir, a branch of the greater Zab, and generally identified with the ancient Bumadus. Near this river, Quintius Curtius tells us, that Darius had encamped on the eve of that decisive battle which decided the fate of the Persian monarchy. He had crossed the Tigris some miles to the south of Nimroud, and, passing through Arbil, had forded the Lycus, or Great Zab, from the banks of which he marched to the Bumadus, where he halted to await the coming up of Alexander.

The fertile plains of Mesopotamia were then experiencing the sad consequences of warfare. A band of six thousand Persian horse had been ravaging the country to the west of the Tigris, by the express orders of Darius, and the mouldering flames which had consumed the produce of those fruitful fields were emitting dense columns of smoke as the Macedonian army passed along.* A dark and mist-like cloud hovered over the blackened relics of cultiva-

* Quint. Curtius, lib. 4.

Digitized by Google

tion, and induced the invaders to fear the existence of an ambush between themselves and the Tigris. Their scouts, however, reported that the road was clear, and Alexander reached and forded this rapid stream, in the mid-channel of which the water came up to the horses' necks.*

The passage of the Tigris was effected without the slightest molestation from the enemy. It took place some miles to the south of Nimroud, although the historian does not mention the crossing of the Zab by Alexander. A bold and decisive policy would have suggested the ford of the Tigris as the place of battle, but it was the fate of Darius to suffer from the vacillation and indecision of his counsellors and of his own mind. Another alternative lay before him, which perhaps, indeed, he intended originally to have adopted. Not far from the banks of the Bumadus rose the mountains of Kurdistan, within whose winding and intricate defiles he might have laughed to scorn the efforts of his pursuers. Among the names of the numerous Persian auxiliaries we find the Cadusii mentioned, who were probably the Cardusii or Carduchii, the old antagonists of Xenophon and the ancestors of the modern Kurds. If these wild people, themselves of Persian descent,

* Quint. Curtius, lib. 4.

Digitized by Google

had been disposed to receive within their mountains the last monarch of their race, a small and select band would have sufficed to arrest the progress of the invaders. Entangled among the rocky regions of Kurdistan, they would have been exposed to dangers, against which, both their courage and their discipline might have proved inadequate to defend them. It is probable, however, that this design, if indeed it was ever entertained, was frustrated by the temptations which the nature of the ground between the Hazir and the Zab offered to one whose principal force consisted of horsemen.

The union of the two rivers forms a species of Delta, the superficies of which is covered by mounds and slight undulations, presenting few or no impediments to the irregular movements of eastern cavalry; yet the uneven nature of the soil might seriously interfere with the complicated manœuvres of the phalanx, justly esteemed the chief strength of the opposing host. The site seemed one of the most favourable that could have been chosen for the display of the principal advantages possessed by the Persians, and Darius might, without incurring the reproach of vain confidence, have flattered himself with the hope of complete success. The result, however, is too well known to need repetition. The

Digitized by Google

same sun which had shone on the gaily-accoutred ranks of the Persians, and had received their adoration, was destined to behold their defeat. Before he had sunk below the horizon in the west, Darius was crossing the Zab, a hopeless and despairing fugitive.

Doctor Grant has suggested, and the notion is not void of plausibility, that the Syriac name of the neighbouring district, Beth Garmæ, which means literally the house or place of bnoes, derives its origin from the sanguinary contest, which was known afterwards as the battle of Arbela.* The historians who have recorded it, mention the village of Guagaumela as the nearest inhabited region, but there are, at present, no traces of such an appellation in the immediate vicinity.

After a ride of two hours and a h alf from Bagh Tolli, we reached the ford of the Zab, which is opposite the village of Kellak. This rapid and dangerous river derives its present name from the Chaldean word signifying a wolf, with which also its Greek appellation of Lycus corresponds. It probably owes its title to the violence with which its waters rush along when the mountain rivulets have been swollen by the rains, and discharge their streams into its channel. At these seasons it is considered

* "Nestorians or the Lost Tribes," chap. iv.

Digitized by Google

dangerous to cross, and very frequently rafts and horses are borne along with impetuous force into the Tigris, with which the Zab effects a junction near Nimroud.

The mode of transit is very simple and of ancient date. A rudely constructed raft rests upon inflated skins, and in this manner conveys not only passengers, but even heavy merchandize across the river. The horses swim over, guided by a man who supports himself on two small inflated skins. The rafts are the same as those used at Mosul, which periodically descend as far as Baghdad with passengers and goods. When they undertake this latter journey, however, a small hut or cabin is formed of branches and boughs of trees, beneath the shelter of which the traveller reposes during his voyage. At night, the rafts anchor near the shore, and are sometimes exposed to the visitations of unwelcome intruders.

On one occasion, a gentleman had secured one of these rafts at Mosul, and at first found no reason to repent of his choice. His cabin was comfortable enough, and reclining on his temporary diwan, he found himself able to wile away the time with a volume of Chateaubriand. A small window at the side of his hut was generally left open towards

Digitized by Google

evening to admit any passing breeze that might feel disposed to enter and beguile the tedium of an anchorage which presented few attractions to the eye.

The first evening of his voyage, M. —— thought he might enjoy the prospect, and surveyed it from his window. But he saw nothing but a continuation of barren plains reaching down to within a few yards of his raft. With a shrug, he retreated to his diwan, lighted a cigar, and was soon engrossed by the charms of 'Atala.' Suddenly his aperture was darkened, a dark countenance with shaggy hair intruded itself, and a rough voice growled out in no very courteous tones the fatal syllables, "Backsheesh." M. —— was at first much alarmed, as he had some valuable property about him, but recovering his presence of mind, he stepped out on what I may call the deck of the raft to reconnoitre the numbers of the enemy. They consisted of three half naked Arabs, who stood holding the raft, with the water up to their waists. M. —— thought at first of cutting his cable and floating off, but he perceived that the raftmen were half dead with fright, and he feared the result of an attempt to escape. He determined, therefore, to parley with the foe, and, being a good Arabic scholar, entered

Digitized by Google

into conversation with his captors, and, after a little discussion, succeeded in obtaining their concurrence in his departure by the welcome present of a few pounds of Mosul tobacco.

The sons of Ishmael transferred the much-coveted luxury to the shore, where they sat smoking nearly half the night, and the next morning saluted their late captive with loud acclamations and good wishes as he floated off gaily, congratulating himself upon his fortunate escape.

We were nearly an hour crossing the Zab, and found the current very violent about midway. After strenuous exertions, however, we arrived in safety at Kellak, but, with the exception of one or two old men, the village had been entirely deserted by its inhabitants. Those who were left behind informed us, that a band of predatory Kurds having paid them a visit the day before, had plundered the village and murdered two of the people, on account of which all the survivors abandoned their dwellings and took refuge in Arbela.

"Those Kurds are true sons of the Accursed," said the ferryman, "when Mahommed Pasha, peace be upon him, was alive, they dared not have made free with even the sole of an old slipper. He has gone now, and every thief of a Kurd, that can muster a

Digitized by Google

dozen idle rascals together, makes up for lost time by spoiling honest people, and taking their lives if they resist."

"But the Pasha was an oppressor, and a tyrant," I observed.

"It is true," was his reply, "yet still he kept the country quiet, and these Kurds within their mountains. We never saw their ill-favoured visages in our neighbourhood before, may confusion light upon them. As for oppression, O Effendi, we are used to that, and probably, may suffer as much, or more under the next Pasha, as we did under him that is gone. Still it is something to wake in the morning with a whole throat, and not be roused up at midnight with your roof all on fire, your women screaming, and your children spitted like Kabob, on the spears of those unclean sons of darkness. Heavy taxes are bad, but they are better than all this."

I felt much disposed to agree with the sentiments of the worthy ferryman, who, however, was a native of a village on the other side, and after expressing my hope that they might remain free from a similar visitation, I mounted my horse, and rode on to rejoin my companions, who were some distance in advance. As I proceeded, I could not help con-

Digitized by Google

trasting the feelings, which an occurrence like that above mentioned, would excite in England, with those produced by it in this country. In our own land, a single murder would be the talk of the whole neighbourhood, but here, the violent death of two persons, and the plunder of a village, seemed too much of an every day event, to create much notice. The people who were only a few miles distant from the scene of the atrocity, professed their utter ignorance of it.

It was now near evening, but as we had not deemed it prudent to pass the night at Kellak, in consequence of the attack by the Kurds, we rode on to Tov Zawa, a village of about fifty houses, situated on the southern bank of the river. We had but poor accomodations here, however, and were glad to leave it the next morning at half-past nine.

For a short time, we followed the course of the Zab, having on the left, a range of low hills, which intervened between us and the river. At length our road oore round in an easterly direction, and we passed the villages of Oghlan, Kiouy Itch, and Kiouy Jaghan arriving at Ain Quawa about 2 P. M. The latter place is situated on an extensive plain, bounded to the north-east by low hills. The inhabitants were nearly all of them Christians of the Chaldean

Digitized by Google

Church, and ardently attached to the sway of Rome. One of their priests visited us to ask whether or no the English were Christians. He gazed on an Arabic translation of our Liturgy with wonder and surprise, but made no comments upon it.

Near Ain Quawa we observed several plantations which were irrigated in a singular manner. A number of wells had been sunk, each at a small distance from the other, which supplied water to the cultivators. These were connected with each other by a species of aqueduct or channel beneath the surface. The reason of this strange arrangement did not appear, but its origin was ascribed to very early times.

We could discern clearly and distinctly the mound and minaret of Arbil from Ain Quawa, and an hour's ride brought us to the suburb of that town, where the chief object deserving of notice was a broken tower, which serves as a land-mark for many miles around. This tower, which is attached to the ruins of a mosque, resembled greatly in size and shape the round minaret at Mosul, connected with the dilapidated building still bearing the name of the Prophet George. The latter inclines almost to the same extent as the leaning tower of Pisa, the fashion of which was probably introduced from the East. The

Digitized by Google

minaret at Arbil probably measured about 120 feet in height, and was surrounded by three rings of a bluish colour, which were probably intended to strengthen the shaft. I made an attempt to ascend the staircase, but found it so dark and blocked up with rubbish, that I desisted.

The aspect of Arbil is rendered imposing by the elevation of the upper town on an artificial mound about 150 feet in height, the sides of which are plentifully covered with marsh-mallow. The lower town is built in a straggling way at the foot of the mound, in the vicinity of which fragments of the old wall are still visible.

We were quartered at the house of a Turkish Bin Bashi, or Colonel, in the lower town. Our host was absent, but his wife commanded the servants to furnish us with everything that was necessary. He had married two ladies, one for the sake of interest, and the other for affection, but his servant hinted that his time was not pleasantly spent between them. Each had her own separate establishment with servants and slaves attached, and the Bin Bashi was at present residing in the house of his other wife. Great jealousy existed between the two, and all the arts of espionage and intrigue were resorted to, in order to discover when a present had been made by

Digitized by Google

the husband. If he gave a black slave to the first, the second thought herself wronged if she did not obtain two, and thus every outlay that was made in one quarter was expected to be doubled in the other. With these continual demands on his pocket, it may be imagined that the matrimonial happiness of the poor man was very small, but he had to undergo in addition the humours of his two helpmates. Incensed by mutual animosity, each regaled his ear with abuse of her rival, or insinuations that his love for her personally was not sincere. Daggers and cups of poison, which in England we regard as harmless figures of speech, are not unfrequently, used more literally in Turkey, and the death of a husband or a rival may very commonly be traced to the jealous fury of a slighted and suspicious woman.

On walking out to inspect the lower town, we found the principal streets intersected by gutters three feet in breadth, and traversed at intervals by small bridges of brick. The houses seemed for the most part to be constructed from the latter material, and were covered with a species of white-wash or cement. On the eastern side of the mound we perceived some sepulchres covered with domes, and resembling in shape doubtless those whited tombs of which our Saviour spoke, when He cautioned his

Digitized by Google

disciples against the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees.* The form of these chambers of death varies in different parts of the East. In one place four walls inclose, and protect from intruders, the stone sarcophagus, which contains the ashes of the departed, while in another, the dome is supported on pillars only, and the sides are left open. When the latter is the case, the sepulchres frequently serve as asylums for the poor and houseless, as well as for thieves and bad characters.

Beyond these tombs we found some gardens and vineyards, stretching out into the plain, and affording a pleasant retreat for the townsmen during the heats of summer. There is nothing so much delights an Oriental as to "make Kaif.†" With his trusty pipe under his arm, and his tobacco pouch in the breast of his gown, he sallies forth from the dark and narrow streets of the town, to the suburbs, where an assemblage of trees or vines enclosed by a low wall or fence from the road, obtain the name of "bostan" or garden. If a running stream passes through the midst, all the better, and if a troop of jugglers or strolling musicians should be attracted thither, their

* Matt. xxiii. 27.

† This word is not very susceptible of translation, but it generally implies "pleasure," "amusement."

Digitized by Google

presence will add materially to the satisfaction of the Kaif makers.

Stretching his carpet under a tree, the Oriental gazes with half shut eyes on the ripple of the water, or watches, with apparent interest, the curling vapours which ascend from his chibouque. There is nothing of the gay boisterous merriment of northern Europe, none of the light vivacity of the south, connected with an Eastern merry-making. They meet to smoke, perhaps also, to drink some beverage stronger than coffee, though this is seldom; to converse, and to listen to the oft-told stories, which they have laughed or shuddered at times without number before. No women mingle with their unbendings, for it is considered wrong for the two sexes to mix together in public, though, among the Christians, this feeling is passing away. When evening comes on, they retire to their homes, pleased and gratified with a day's Kaif, while apparently so little has occurred to call forth either pleasure or satisfaction.

As we returned, we passed through the Bazaar in the lower town. It was a miserable collection of stalls arranged in rows, forming alleys, partly open, and partly covered with boughs and dry leaves. A great crowd came to stare at us, as we walked along, who bestowed from time to time no very flattering

Digitized by Google

comments on our costume. As we proceeded, we observed an altercation going on near one of the stalls, which was destined to terminate in no very pleasant manner. The owner of the shop, a tall and portly looking Jew of about thirty years of age, had given dire offence to a customer, who, though yet in his teens, was a true believer, and determined to exercise the privileges of one. After heaping on the poor Jew many stinging epithets of abuse, in a shrill and piping voice, the urchin raised his small hand and struck the man on the face. The insulted shop-keeper could almost have annihilated his assailant with a single blow, but his hands were tied by the degradation of his people. He received the cuff with quiet submission, raising only a most dismal howl, which he hoped perhaps might excite the compassion of his opponent. The boy seemed at first rather startled by his own act, but soon recovering his composure, he spat in the man's face, and departed.

"That young scapegrace merits richly the bastinado," said I, to one of the Governor's attendants, who accompanied us.

"He is a Sheitan, that boy," was his reply, "but then, you know, O Effendi, that he is young, and the other is only a Jew."

Only a Jew!—A Mohammedan will often excuse

Digitized by Google

even murder in this manner, and think no more of it than of the slaughter of a bullock. There was a time when they would have said only a Christian, but they have been soundly beaten since then into a little more forbearance. Yet a few years ago no Frank could enter Damascus in his own dress or on horseback, without being exposed to the insults of the mob. The first European who ventured there with a hat on his head, obtained the undignified surname of Abou'l Tanjara the father of a pot.

After we had taken a little repose, we sallied forth to visit the upper town. It has two entrances, one of which faces the north-east, while the other is due south. We ascended by the side of the mound, passed over a drawbridge, and entered a dark narrow gateway, which brought us into the court-yard of the castle. Around the outer rim of the mound, the backs of the houses being joined together, formed a species of rampart enclosing the whole of the upper town. When we reached the court-yard, we found it occupied, as usual, by groups of armed attendants, kawasses and Albanian Irregulars, who all looked very fierce and ferocious, with their long mustachios which they twisted to and fro between their fingers, as though they were handling the hair

Digitized by Google

The Governor of Arbil was seated in the upper corner of a long room, decorated with warlike devices, and filled with the chief people of the town.

He was a young man for his station, but had been appointed to it as a distant relation of Mohammed Pasha. We took our seats, and during the coffee and pipes, the usual conversation ensued.

How did we like the country?

Praise be to God we liked it very much.

Did we intend staying?

Inshallah, we might, or we might not.

Was England a large country, and was it true that the English were a species of Mohammedans, and broke images wherever they found them?

These and other similar questions, with which I will not trouble the reader, having been responded to in a satisfactory manner, the conversation turned on the Nestorian captives, whom his Excellency promised at parting, on his head and his eyes, should be forthcoming at Mosul in the course of a week. I am happy to be able to add that he kept his word, and we enjoyed the gratification of welcoming another band of rescued captives, and of witnessing their interview with those of their relatives who were already in the city. Tears ran down the sunburnt cheeks of the poor creatures, as they embraced and

Digitized by Google

kissed each other, pouring forth all the warm and tender epithets of Oriental affection; mother's clasped their daughters to their bosoms, and husbands hailed once more the partners of their homes, freed from the stern and degrading yoke of the Moslem. The Patriarch watched the meeting, but as he lifted up his hand to bless the new comers, his emotions overpowered him, and he wept aloud.

But I must now return to Arbil, where a scene of confusion has taken place since our absence at the castle. The whole of the lower town has been thrown into a dreadful state of alarm, by the report that two horses, who were quietly feeding near the minaret, have been carried off by the Kurds. The inhabitants anticipated nothing less than a general attack, and indiscrimate massacre from the barbarians of the hills. A large crowd had assembled, and were discussing measures of defence before our door. By-and-bye the exclamations of Mashallah had progressed to Inshallah, and at last terminated in "Baccalum."* Public confidence was, however, in some measure restored by the announcement that the chief of the police had secured one of the thieves, and was bearing him in chains to the dungeon in the upper town.

* We shall see.

Digitized by Google

Soon after the capture had taken place, a Christian arrived from Shucklawa, a town situated on a mountain of the same name, about a day's journey from Arbela, bringing tidings of a shameful outrage which had just been perpetrated by the Kurds of the neighbourhood. During the vigorous administration of Mohammed Pasha, the Christians of Shucklawa had lived in peace and amity with their Moslem neighbours. When his death, however, became generally known, the Kurds, animated by the success of their late enterprise against the Christians of the hills, determined on introducing a little persecution into the hitherto quiet community. Their hostility against the detested Nazarenes, was inflamed by the persuasions and harangues of a Mollah of their own race, who was by no means deficient in that fanatical bigotry, which rages in the breasts of the majority of his brethren.

The Christian inhabitants of the village were peaceful cultivators, who had learned to bear oppression with a patient shrug. They had shared in none of the warlike measures resorted to by the Nestorians of the hills. As Chaldean adherents of the see of Rome, they were little disposed to sympathise with heretics, had their courage even impelled them to active resistance. But this mattered little, for they

Digitized by Google

bore the hated name of Nazarene—that title which awakens the bitterest animosity in the bosom of a true Moslem. The Mollah hated the Christians, and determined, in some way or other, to gratify his feelings of enmity against them.

An ancient church, which some said, had been first erected in the fourth or fifth century, stood within the confines of the village. At its simple altar thousands of the forefathers of the humble Christians had knelt to celebrate the most sacred rites of their religion. In the hymns of the inspired Psalmist, and in the soothing consolations of the Holy Volume, they had forgotten their toils, and felt, for a time at least, the yoke of slavery less bitter and less galling. It was the only relic that bound them to the past—that recalled the old days of independence and freedom. Its furniture and sacred utensils offered no temptation to the spoiler. A metal cup and a paten of less value served for the celebration of the Communion, while their tattered Liturgies were so worn, that the priest was obliged to trust to his memory for the holy words of prayer. Above the altar a plain cross of stone reminded the pious villagers of the mysteries of their redemption, and of their own daily lot of suffering.

Into this church, a band of Kurds, headed by the Mollah, forced their way in the night, beat the

Digitized by Google

aged priest, who, by the light of a single lamp, was praying for his slumbering flock, snatched the cross from the altar, and dashed it with curses on the stone floor. They tore up the Liturgies, carried off the sacramental cup and paten, and committed in the sacred building actions which I will not pollute my page by describing.

Next day the frightened and insulted Christians contrived to send news of what had happened to Ain Quawa. The priest of that village was well known to the French Consul at Baghdad, who, on hearing of the outrage, despatched immediately his dragoman to the spot to make inquiries. Two witnesses were required, but such was their fear of the Kurds, that none of the Christians dared venture to accompany the dragoman to Baghdad, although the Mollah boasted openly in the vicinity of his valorous achievements, and hinted, even, that he was willing to repeat the offence. At length two men, who had no families, on whom the Kurds might wreak their vengeance during their absence, consented to go and bear testimony before the Pasha of Baghdad. It was understood, however, that they were not to return to Mosul until more settled times.

The Eastern Christians look always to French authorities for protection against the tyranny of their

Digitized by Google

enemies, nor can they be blamed for so doing. This protection, however, renders them devoted to French interests, and in the event of the dissolution of the Turkish Empire their aid might be valuable. England could, if she would, at little trouble to herself, secure the friendship of the non-Papal Christians, and render, in this way, some important services to humanity. Did the people of England but know what cruelties are often practised on their fellow Christians under the wretched rule of the Turks, the national benevolence for which they are so justly celebrated, would induce them to make some strong representations on the subject to the Foreign Office.

Our interference on the behalf of the unfortunate Rayahs is a measure demanded imperatively from our national justice and Christianity. It would cost us nothing, not even a warlike demonstration. Mohammedanism is too feeble to require the influence of arms; its rulers are not sufficiently attached to it to hazard any loss on its behalf. A simple order to our Consuls to protect and assist Christians unjustly oppressed, is all that would be requisite.

We left Arbil the next morning, after the capture of the horse-stealer, and after riding seven hours and a half, reached Kermalis, a large Chaldean village to

Digitized by Google

the north of the Zab, which is supposed by some to have been the Gaugamela of those historians who describe the actions of Alexander. It is clear that the battle must have taken place on this side of the Zab, as Quintus Curtius expressly mentions that Darius crossed that river in his flight to Arbela. Yet for my own part I should feel disposed to place it farther East, and nearer the Hazir or Bumadas.

We arrived at Mosul in safety, but unfortunate news awaited me at home. I had been presented with two young gazelles, of great beauty, whose natural shyness I succeeded, in some measure, in overcoming. They would eat out of my hand, and often beguiled a heavy hour by their playful and sportive gambols. During my absence they had ascended to the terrace, and were diverting themselves there, when my servant suddenly made his appearance above, and gave chace to them. The scared and terrified animals bounded away, and in their attempt to leap over the vacant space between the terraces, they fell upon the hard stones in the court below, and were almost instantaneously killed.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER III.

Journey to Nimroud. The Sabre. The Priest's Tale.

Soon after my return from Arbil, a Russian traveller arrived at Mosul, who was anxious to make a few excursions in the vicinity. As, however, he had been somewhat fatigued by solitary journeys, he was desirous of securing my company in his intended trip. I had placed one of the rooms of my house at his disposal; and finding that he was likely to prove an agreeable compagnon de voyage, our arrangements for a short excursion were soon made, and carried into effect.

We obtained from the executive of Mosul the services of a Government kawass, hired posthorses, and engaged a tall Chaldean, named Baho, to act as a guide and general servant. At 10 A.M. we had got

Digitized by Google

our baggage safely arranged on the backs of two stout beasts of burden, and were preparing to mount, when my friend B ——, and Kas Botros volunteered to bear us company as far as Nimroud. In Oriental travel the well-known proverb of "the more the merrier," is not without weight; and we gladly welcomed this addition to our party.

My old friend Mohammed had come in to smoke a morning pipe, and was much astonished at all this bustle in the court yard.

"Are you going back to Ingelterra?" inquired he.

"Not this time, my friend," I said, "we are merely going to Mar Matti, to Nimroud, and to Rabban Hormuzd."

"Mashallah!" exclaimed my old companion, "what people these Franks are. Here have I been living for twenty years in Mosul, and have never gone further, during that period, than to the Mound of Nebbi Yunas. Surely you cannot be in your senses to change this comfortable diwan for a rough saddle and a stony road. Then you will meet Kurds, Yezidees, and other obscene sons of Satan, who may rob you, or cut your throats. Allah knows, Khowajeh Yacoub, whether I shall ever smoke another pipe in your house."

I endeavoured to quiet his fears by the assurance that he would most probably see my face again in a

Digitized by Google

week; and with this consolatory remark I rode off. My Russian friend had fully equipped himself for the dangers of the road. Two small pocket pistols hung suspended by a silver chain from his belt, in which were deposited two others of larger size, while by his side swung a heavy cavalry sword. Our servants were also armed, but I myself had neglected to take any weapons of offence or defence. I had not proceeded the length of the street, however, before I heard a voice calling me from behind. I stopped my horse, and, turning round, beheld Mohammed, in a state of breathless exhaustion, carrying a formidable sabre.

"Take at least this with you," he gasped, as he came up with me.

"O Mohammed," I exclaimed, "I am not afraid of the Kurds or the Yezidees; and besides, if a great number attack me, it would be worse than madness to resist."

But Mohammed had settled in his own mind, that I could not be safe without a sword; and that the sight of one, even though resting peacefully in its scabbard, would scare away whole legions of the much-dreaded Kurds and Yezidees. I yielded to his entreaties, and consented to accept the loan of the formidable weapon.

Digitized by Google

"It is a true Shami,"* said he, as I fastened the belt, "take it, and go in peace."

When we arrived at the bank of the river, we found a ferry boat had just come in with some Albanian mercenaries. Nothing could be more repulsive or ruffianly than the general appearance of these men. Their features were wan and sallow, the effects of unlimited debauchery, while their garments hung loose and ragged about them. The white kilts had become brown, and the lace of their jackets was torn and tarnished. They gazed upon us with marked ferocity, and would doubtless have felt great pleasure in cutting our throats, and rifling our baggage. They had just returned from laying waste three villages, and carried with them several strings of human ears, which were afterwards suspended near the chief gate of Mosul.

We crossed the Tigris, and directed our course along its eastern bank, in a southerly direction. After we had ridden on in peace for some time the sky grew dark and louring, and gave unmistakeable intimations of a heavy shower. We spurred on as fast as we could, but all our efforts were ineffectual to avoid the rain, which soon began to pour down in torrents, and was accompanied with hail stones of an enormous size. Holding a hasty council on the top of one of the neigh-

* Damascus blade.

Digitized by Google

bouring mounds, we speedily agreed as to the necessity of seeking for shelter, but it did not appear clear in what direction we were to commence the search. At length some one remembered, that not far from our present rendezvous he had once encountered a small collection of huts, entitled Hawah Arslan, inhabited by Kurds. A run was accordingly made for the village, the poor, astonished post-horses were urged at a most unusual rate over the downs, and, after a brisk ride of an hour, we reached our destination, as wet as if we had stood for some time under a shower-bath.

The habitation which was allotted to us was a wretched hut constructed of stones of all shapes and sizes plastered with mud, and covered with a roof by no means impervious to the rain. At last we found a dry spot whereon to kindle a fire, which was effected with no small difficulty, as the wood brought in for our use was green, and showed a decided antipathy to fire. After we had changed our clothes we sat round the small table cross-legged, and demolished a Pillaw with much appetite and satisfaction, though the rice was none of the cleanest, and abundantly mixed with small stones.

After dinner the fire blazed up nobly, and we prepared to spend the evening as comfortably as we could, though the rain, which occasionally worked its way

Digitized by Google

through the roof, by no means improved our position. By and by, the élite of the village came in to pay us a visit. We gave them some coffee and tobacco, they sat down with us, and we all became very good friends in a few minutes. They sang Kurdish songs, and told Kurdish stories about robber chieftains, who lived in castles perched on the wild crags of their native land. These gentlemen seemed to resemble the "Barons bold" of our own early ballads. They were not very honest nor very scrupulous. They had a decided penchant for cutting off heads, and carrying off unfortunate damsels, while they were by no means wanting in rude wit and dauntless courage. The listeners drank in eagerly the tales of these good old times, and seemed to think them much better than the present. Perhaps they were right.

My friend Kas Botros was accustomed, not without reason, to pique himself upon his storytelling abilities. Few events could happen that did not draw from him some anecdote or recital. He was by no means, therefore, disposed to sit a silent listener to semi-barbarian tales, and determined on taking the conversation into his own hands. The Kurdish villagers who understood Arabic were willing to listen, and the worthy Abuna thus began.

"There lived many years ago, a Sultan who was

Digitized by Google

one of the most prosperous of men. He had gold, jewels, and wives without number, the choicest meats were placed upon his table, while lute players, with voices sweeter than that of Israfil,* poured forth the most delicious sounds for his amusement and for the entertainment of his chosen guests. Three hundred sons and two hundred daughters claimed the honour of being his offspring, and the beauty or good qualities of each had been duly celebrated by the four hundred poets, who extolled in every species of verse the greatness and felicity of so sublime a monarch.

"What could he wish for more? Yet the nature of the sons of Adam is insatiable, and desires ever something new. The monarch grew weary of his pleasures; the gratifications in which he had formerly delighted, disgusted him; and he sighed for the knowledge which is unlawful, and the possession of those secrets which Allah has wisely hidden from the children of men. By degrees he fell into a deep melancholy, diversified however by fits of irritation. The poet who ventured to celebrate his felicity, in a new copy of verses, was told that he was a liar for his pains; while another of his brethren, who presented to the monarch on his birthday a new poem, which he had expected would produce a gold dinar a line, received a serious bruise

* The angel of song.

Digitized by Google

from the royal slipper, which the impatient Sultan had hurled at his head. The indignant man of letters went home and composed a satire on the ungrateful prince, which he sold to one of the Sultan's enemies for two hundred pieces of gold.

"Withdrawing himself into the deep solitude of his gardens, the dissatisfied monarch pondered over his situation, and his desires. The fairest of his wives appeared to comfort and console him.

"'Light of my eyes,' said she, 'wherefore art thou sad?'

"'Plague of my heart,' he replied, 'why art thou troublesome? Surely the chattering of women is more intolerable than the croaking of the green bird of El-Hind. Begone O daughter of the tongue, and leave me to my meditations.'

"The fair Shems-en-nahar was about to try the expedient of a shower of tears, but the pearly drops were arrested by the growing blackness of the royal brow. She saw that it was no time for trifling, and withdrew.

"'Wah!' she exclaimed to herself, as she departed, 'our Lord is surely medjnoon.'*

"The monarch bent his eyes on the ground, in moody silence, when a slight agitation in the neighbouring

* Mad.

Digitized by Google

bushes attracted his attention. He raised his head, and encountered the sharp, half malicious gaze, of a frightful dwarf, with a hump-back and a disproportioned nose, yet habited in rich and costly apparel.

"'What do you here, O father of ugliness?' said the Sultan, laying his hand on his sabre.

"'Fear not O king of the world,' answered the new comer, with a hideous grimace, which he intended for a condescending smile. 'I, and my brethren have long watched with interest your desires, and the melancholy, which at present consumes you. We would fain assist and satisfy you, but people of our species never grant favours without expecting somewhat in return.'

"'What tribute would you require as the reward of your help?' eagerly enquired the Sultan.

"'We will not deal hardly with you, O king,' replied the dwarf, 'we can grant you all you desire, with the condition that on the twelfth day of each month, at this present hour you present yourself in this place, and, as an act of homage, place on the ground, three bowls of milk. You will take notice, however, that this must be done by yourself, and by no other person.'

"'That is easy enough,' exclaimed the Sultan, 'I consent with many thanks to the compact.'

"'Take then this ring,' said the dwarf, 'and

Digitized by Google

beware that it quits not your finger, for know, that if it touches water, all that drink of the rivers and streams in your kingdom, will instantly become mad. While you are the wearer, your most arduous wish will be obeyed.'

"'Hearing and obedience,' replied the Sultan, as he received the ring.

"It contained a single diamond remarkable for its size and lustre: the king bent down his head to examine it, and when he again raised it, the dwarf was gone.

"Delighted with his new acquisition, the Sultan determined to put its powers to the proof. He wished to view the desert city of Suleiman Ibn Daood, and immediately he found himself in the midst of its great square; he desired to stand on the summit of El Kaf,* and behold he was surrounded with clouds, and saw the gigantic birds of those regions, flying along many miles below him. Nay, it is said, that on one occasion, curiosity led him as far as the centre of the earth, where he watched the gambols of the subterranean Genii, and heard an assembly of Dives, disputing learnedly on the properties of the seal of Solomon.

* A fabulous mountain, which, according to Oriental geographers, surrounds the world.

Digitized by Google

"The tempers of most people improve when they succeed in obtaining their own way, and our Sultan was no exception to the general rule. His politeness and affability delighted every one, Shems-en-nahar was in raptures, and even the discontented poet forgot the affront of the slipper, and finding that he could not conveniently recall the satire he had sold, indemnified the monarch by composing one doubly bitter upon the purchaser.

"For some time, the king adhered faithfully to the terms of the compact, and presented with laudable regularity the appointed tribute. His fear of the dwarf, however, had greatly worn off, and he began to consider with himself, the propriety of performing his homage by proxy. Unfortunately for his own peace, he had entrusted his Wuzeer, Ibn Fadel, with the secret, and the crafty minister, who had been bred in a college of Mollahs, treated his master's scruples with polite derision. He represented to his Majesty, that it was but too great honour for a misbegotten dwarf to minister to the amusement of so great a king, that in fact, the ring and its wonderful powers were but a ransom for a life justly forfeited by unwarrantable intrusion into the sacred precincts of the court, and finally, that kings as the Vice-gerents of Allah, had undoubtedly a right to do what they

Digitized by Google

thought proper, and were not bound by the same ties of obligation or gratitude, which influence common men.

"'But my promise, O Wuzeer,' remonstrated the Sultan.

"'Gracious Sir,' argued the minister, 'this individual whoever he may be, is doubtless, one of the unbelieving, and therefore, all promises or oaths, made to him, are null and void. Nay, for ought we know, he may be one of that accursed race of Eblis, so frequently denounced by our Holy Prophet, and whom, as the known enemies of true Musselmen, we are bound by our religion, to persecute to the utmost of our ability. Do not give yourself then the trouble to perform so irksome a duty, but let one of your slaves undertake the office in your stead."

"The King was irresolute at first, but at length he yielded to the arguments of his Wuzeer, and calling a trusty slave, he commanded him to carry the three bowls of milk to the appointed place. The slave went and returned, but reported that nothing extraordinary had happened.

"'Said I not well, O King of the world,' observed Ibn Fadel, with a self-complacent simper.

"The Sultan felt a pang of inward reproach as he thought over what had passed, but he determined not to give way to his feelings.

Digitized by Google

"'I will go forth and make Kaif,' said he.

"A brilliant cortège was soon on horseback, and issuing from the portals of the palace. Shems-en-nahar, and the ladies of the court, followed in curtained carriages, drawn by oxen.

"The cavalcade proceeded to a delightful grove on the banks of the river, which intersected the capital city of the Sultan's dominions. Here the Sultan and his male courtiers dismounted, and seated themselves on the grass, while Shems-en-nahar and her ladies proceeded farther on, to some gardens which overlooked the river, where, in a superb pavilion lined with diwans, they enjoyed their Kaif, guarded by the zealous eunuchs of the Harem, from the profane gaze of any intruder.

"The Sultan grew more cheerful as the time flew on, and he quaffed goblet after goblet of Shiraz wine. When he first sat down, he thought he traced a strange looking form, lurking among the trees, and had even mentioned it to the Wuzeer, but the latter after a careful search, reported that no one could be found in the vicinity who was not of the court, and the monarch gave himself up to merriment.

"In the meantime, Shems-en-nahar and her ladies, were reposing after their bath, while some of their slaves played and sang for their diversion. The

Digitized by Google

music was disturbed by a knock at the door of the pavilion. A female slave opened it, and gave admittance to an aged woman of loathsome and repulsive aspect.

"'I would speak with the Sultana Shems-en-nahar,' said the old crone.

"'What do you desire of me?' said the lady, arising from her diwan.

"'I must deliver my message to you alone,' replied the new comer, 'cause these to stand apart.'

"The ladies withdrew to another apartment of the pavilion, leaving the old woman with the Sultana. The latter then turned an enquiring glance on her visitor.

"'Queen of the world,' said the crone, 'you must have noticed with surprise, the strange change which has taken place lately in the king, your husband, but you will be more astonished and pained when you hear the cause. Know, then, that a daughter of the Djin has fallen in love with him, and is beloved by him, while you are marked out as a sacrifice to her jealousy, unless you take measures to avert your doom. Happily, however, the remedy is in your own power. The Djinee has given the Sultan a ring, which both attracts his affections, and binds his destiny indissolubly with hers. If you can pluck off the ring from his finger, and throw it into yonder stream, the spell

Digitized by Google

will be broken, and his love will be restored to you.'

"The ladies of Shems-en-nahar, were alarmed by a loud scream, they returned to find their mistress alone, and lying in a fainting fit on the diwan. They applied the usual remedies, and sent one of the eunuchs to acquaint the Sultan with what had occurred.

"The King came hastily, for he dearly loved Shems-en-nahar, and felt deeply anxious on account of the tidings which he had received. She revived as soon as she heard his voice.

"'What aileth thee, O my eyes?' inquired the monarch.

"'Nothing, O my Lord,' was the reply, 'but the weather is oppressive, and I am fatigued with bathing.'

"She took the hand which was graciously extended to her, and while pressing it to her lips, affected for the first time, to notice the ring.

"'What a beautiful diamond, may I examine it?' she asked.

"The Sultan, in his anxiety, had forgotten the caution of the dwarf, and he was desirous to do everything in his power to soothe his fair Sultana. He drew the ring from his finger, and placed it in her hand. She started up from the sofa with the bound of a gazelle,

Digitized by Google

and opening the window of the pavilion, cast the fatal gift into the river.

"'Now the spell is broken, and thou art wholly mine,' she exclaimed, as she threw herself into the Sultan's arms.

"The monarch stood for a moment mute with terror, as the consequences of the fatal act flashed across his mind, then, uttering an imprecation on his own folly, he pushed her rudely from him, and rushed from the pavilion.

"When the unfortunate Sultan returned to his companions, he found them indulging in all the wild freaks of insanity, with goblets in their hands, which at once betrayed the cause of their conduct. They laughed, shouted, sang, and danced: respect was thrown entirely aside, and those who had shown in former times the most slavish deference to the monarch, were now most forward in their familiarity. Plucking his beard with sorrow, the Sultan fled into the recesses of the neighbouring wood, where he found Ibn Fadel, who had secured himself from the temptation of drinking water, by imbibing a considerable quantity of wine.

"The king and his minister held a hasty consultation, the result of which was that they both determined to retire to the palace, and endeavour by digging, to dis-

Digitized by Google

cover a spring, on which the malediction of the dwarf would take no effect. They returned to the palace, and repairing to the gardens, they dug for some time, till at length they came to a spring, which they resolved should supply their present necessities, as the curse had power only over the rivers and cisterns, which existed at the time it was pronounced. They soon found, however, their condition most solitary and desolate, for every one had abandoned the palace. Once or twice they ventured abroad, but were driven back by the scoffs and jeers of the crowd, who shouted after them "there go the madmen." They attempted to reason with their persecutors, but in vain, for all the insane were convinced that their Prince and his Wuzeer were mad. To such an extent did this opinion prevail, that it was agreed among the citizens that a physician should make a visit to the two unfortunates in the palace. The man of medicine came, he was distinguished by a long beard, and the gestures of a mountebank, and the Sultan in reply to his questions, bade him indignantly go home and heal himself.

"The physician's report was, of course unfavourable, and his remedy for the madness of his two patients would not have been unworthy of the Avicennas of a more civilized age. He ordered that the King and his

Digitized by Google

Wuzeer should suffer the daily infliction of fifty pails of water, and receive each a hundred stripes, till they acknowledged themselves to be mad. At the end of three days this regimen began to work wonders, and the King said to the Wuzeer.

"'O, Ibn Fadel, let us drink of the water of the river, and become even as the rest, for to what avail is our reason, if we are persecuted for being mad. My soles are sore from the bastinado, and my garments flow with water even as a fountain, yet the consciousness of my sanity will neither heal the one, nor dry the other. Surely the poet has wisely said, that 'if a wise man would dwell in peace among fools, he must also become foolish.'

"The Wuzeer agreed fully with the sentiments of his Sovereign, they both drank of the river, and the next day were received with acclamations by a grateful and frantic crowd."*

* Part of the above story was related by my friend the priest at the time alluded to, but as I heard it afterwards in a more complete form, I have given the reader the benefit of my after knowledge. My chief reason for inserting it, is to furnish a specimen of the narratives, which even at the present day are the delight of Orientals. This story recommended itself to my notice by its freedom from the gross indelicacy which is too commonly the characteristic of Eastern tales. Yet even in this some alterations have been found necessary.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IV.

Tell-Nimroud. Monastery of Mar Behnam. Khoorsabad.

The conclusion of the priest's story was a signal for the departure of our visitors, who seemed well satisfied with their entertainment. We now thought of retiring to rest, but it was no easy matter to parcel out the mud floor among four people. One found that when he had selected a place, which seemed suitable, and had spread his coverlet upon it, a small hillock, which he never observed before, prevented his reclining with comfort. Another discovered that a pool of water occupied the greater part of his allotment, while a third gazed with gloomy forebodings on the suspicious appearance of the roof, which seemed likely to admit the rain during the night. At length we made our arrangements, and were fast sinking into the arms of Morpheus, when the storm of rain and hail com-

Digitized by Google

menced anew. Our coverlets were soon flooded, and we determined to sit up for the remainder of the night in the dryest corner of the hut. To our great relief, morning dawned at last, and we prepared to resume our journey.

We rode along over a succession of small mounds, each containing, it may be, no inconsiderable portion of the relics of old Nineveh, until we reached a village of mud huts, about a mile and a half distant from the Tell, or mound of Nimroud. This village is situated near the apex of the Delta, formed by the junction of the Tigris and the Zab, about twenty-five miles to the south of Mosul. From hence, after a slight rest, we proceeded to the Tell itself, which has since been the scene of Mr. Layard's discoveries.

Tell Nimroud consists of an assemblage of mounds, the highest of which is of a pyramidal form. As we rambled over the grass-clad eminences, we discovered from time to time fragments of bricks inscribed with the cuneiform character. We talked of M. Botta's discoveries, and I remarked to our Russian companion, half in jest, the probability of finding some Assyrian relics in the mound over which we were walking.

"Let us try," said he, laughing, as he drew from its sheath his long sabre, and converted it into a temporary spade.

Digitized by Google

The infection of investigation seized us all. Swords and a spear or two, which we borrowed from some of the villagers, were put into requisition, and we were soon busily engaged in turning over the soil. A few bricks were the reward of our labours, but as we shortly became fatigued with such desultory work, we left off and returned to the village.

The Sheikh, in whose house we had taken up our abode, inquired earnestly what treasure we had found, and was much disappointed when assured that we sought for nothing of the kind. He appeared half incredulous, and asserted with emphasis that Franks were too wise to travel all that distance to look for old stones.

The Tell of Nimroud and its lately discovered treasures have excited so much interest that I trust I may be pardoned if I interrupt the course of the narrative to bestow a few remarks on the identity of this site with that of the ancient city of Rehoboth, mentioned in Genesis x. 11.*

It is evident from the sculptures which have been discovered at Nimroud, that these mounds were in ancient days occupied by some large Assyrian city. Major Rawlinson, in his interesting paper on Assyrian Antiquities, quoted in the *Athenæum* of January

* "Out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh and the city Rehoboth and Calah."

Digitized by Google

26, 1850, assumes that the ruins of Nimroud represent the old city of Calah, or Halah, while he places Nineveh at Nebbi Yunas. Yet it appears likely that the ancient Calah, or Halah, which was probably the capital of the district of Calachene, must have been nearer to the Kurdish Mountains. Ptolemy mentions the province of Calachene as bounded on the north by the Mountains of Armenia, and on the south by the district of Adiabene.* Most writers place Ninus, or Nineveh, within the latter province. But if so, Adiabene would include also Nimroud, and, therefore, it is not probable that Halah, or Calah, could have occupied the site indicated by Major Rawlinson. St. Ephraim, himself a learned Syrian and well acquainted with the history and geography of the East, considers Calah to be the modern Hatareh, a large town inhabited chiefly by Yezidees, and situated N.N.W. of Nineveh.† Between Hatareh and the site of Nineveh we find a village

* Ptolemy, lib. vi. cap. i.

† Strabo, lib. 16, mentions the plain in the vicinity of Nineveh, and seems to consider it as not belonging to the province of Adiabene. But his testimony, if taken, would also exclude that city, and the land to the southward of it, from the district of Calachene, as he enumerates that as a distinct part of Assyria immediately afterwards. In the arrangement of the dioceses recorded in Assemani, tom. iii. Athoor and Adiabene seem to be continually connected, while Calachene is spoken of as nearer the mountains.

Digitized by Google

bearing the name of Ras el Ain, which is evidently a corrupted form of the Resen of Genesis. It is worthy of remark that this theory confirms the statement made in Genesis x. 12, where Resen is represented as occupying a midway position between Calah and Nineveh. But assuming Major Rawlinson's hypothesis to be correct, it is clear that there would be no room for a large city between Nebbi Yunas and Nimroud, a distance of, at most, twenty-five miles.

Nor is it certain that the latter may be considered as the site of the Larissa of Xenophon. A considerable interval must have taken place between the passage of the river Zab by the Ten Thousand and their arrival at the Tigris. It is expressly mentioned that they forded a mountain stream, which seems to have been of some width, soon after they had passed over the Zab. But no vestige of any stream of this kind appears between Nimroud and the Tigris. It is probable, therefore, that the *Χαραδρα* of Xenophon was the Hazir, or Bumadas, after passing which, the Ten Thousand marched in a north-westerly direction past the modern village of Kermalis to the Tigris. At a short distance from the latter they encountered a ruined city, which Xenophon terms Larissa, and which occupied probably the site of the modern Ras

Digitized by Google

el Ain. The village known by this name is about twelve miles from the Tigris, but the ancient city may have been much nearer.*

Both Ptolemy and Ammianus Marcellinus mention a city situated at the mouth of the Zab, on precisely the same site as that occupied by the mounds of Nimroud, which they term Birtha, or Virtha. But Birtha, or Britha, in Chaldee, signifies the same as Rehoboth in Hebrew, namely, wide squares or streets, an identity in name which seems to imply also an identity in locality. It appears likely, therefore, that Nimroud is the same as Rehoboth, which it is said Asshur founded after his departure from the land of Shinar.

On leaving Tell N ud we directed our course eastward, towards the village of El Khudder, in order to visit the ruined monastery of Mar Behnam. We arrived there in about three hours and a half, and found only a few mud huts situated near the convent. It had formerly belonged to the Syrian Jacobites, but, from want of funds, they had been obliged to abandon it. The church and the dwellings of the monks were still in a very perfect condition.

Near the monastery was the tomb of Mar Behnam, situated in a subterranean chapel, covered by a dome,

* Xenophon Anab. lib. iii. cap. iv.

Digitized by Google

which rises, as it were, out of the ground, and resembles, at a distance, a hillock or mound. We descended by a flight of stone steps, but the passage was so dark that we required the aid of torches to find our way. The chapel below was circular in form, and was lighted by lamps of silver suspended from the roof. In the wall were several recesses, containing the sarcophagi of Mar Behnam, and several other saints who lived about his time. On each tomb was an inscription in Syriac, stating the name, age, and station of the occupant.

The odour of the incense, which was daily burnt in this chamber of the dead, served to relieve the close atmosphere of the vault. We were informed that numbers of pilgrims made an annual visit to the tomb, and took away with them portions of the dust of the place, which is esteemed a specific for all kinds of diseases.

Mar Behnam was a Persian by birth, and his sepulchre is mentioned by John of Mardin as having been, in his day, famous for the miracles performed there. The people of the village gave us, during our stay, the following account of him :—

In the reign of Shapoor the Cruel, king of Persia, the chief of the Magi had a son, whose name was Behnam. This youth was beautiful in his person,

Digitized by Google

and famed for pre-eminence in all active exercises. Shapoor himself distinguished him by special notice, and all things seemed to predict a favourable destiny to one who was so generally beloved and admired.

During the reign of Shapoor, the Christians met with bitter persecution, and numbers of them were daily led to execution. Among the unhappy victims was a young female slave, who had been brought up in the family of the chief of the Magi, and had been specially attached to the service of his daughter, the sister of Behnam. Before they led the young girl to the place of execution, she desired earnestly one last interview with her mistress. The daughter of the chief Magus remained several hours in her company, and when she returned to her father's house, she avowed to her surprized and indignant parent that she had been induced to embrace the Christian faith, and was, indeed, a baptized member of the Christian Church.

Unwilling to behold his daughter dragged to prison, the chief of the Magi confined her in one of the chambers of his house, and directed her brother to visit and argue with her on the folly and guilt of abandoning the religion of her ancestors. But the young Christian defended her new creed with such ability and zeal, that Behnam was himself overcome, and, after a vain attempt to stifle his convictions, he

Digitized by Google

sought and obtained Baptism at the hands of Mar Symeon, the Christian Bishop.

Shapoor grew daily more and more inveterate against the Nazarenes. Hundreds suffered martyrdom rather than renounce their faith, nor could age, rank, or station, protect any from the tyrant's rage. At length, Behnam was informed that his secret had been discovered and betrayed. He had not as yet made a public profession of Christianity, and the absence of his father, who had been obliged to quit home for several months, had hitherto prevented his non-attendance on the Magian rites from being observed.

On hearing that his change of religion was discovered, he determined to fly from Persia, and to take up his abode among the inaccessible mountains of Kurdistan. Accompanied by his sister, he quitted the land of his birth, and found a residence in a cave situated near the summit of one of the Assyrian mountains. From this place, he descended into the plains of Nineveh, and taught the faith of Christ to the peasants of Athoor. But his zeal and success awakened the animosity of the Magian priests, who seized upon Mar Behnam and his sister, and put them to a cruel and lingering death.

At the village of El Khudder our party broke up. My Russian friend and I pursued our journey to the

Digitized by Google

convent of St. Matthew, while B—— and Kas Botros returned to Mosul.

From Mar Matti we went on to Shiekh Adi and Rabban Hormuzd. After passing a few hours in Alkosh, we returned to Khoorsabad, where we took up our quarters in the house which M. Botta had erected near the excavations. The workmen had made great progress since my last visit, and several chambers had been discovered connected by galleries or passages, through which we wandered, and contemplated at our ease the wonderful relics of ancient Assyria.

On entering the excavations, we found ourselves in the middle of a hall, which probably formed the reception-room of the palace. Part of the left wall was in a very perfect state. On the first tablet was pourtrayed a siege; two kneeling figures, with bent bows, were shooting at the defenders. The same subject was continued in the second slab: two kneeling archers, clad in mail, were discharging arrows against the defenders of the fortress, who appeared on the ramparts. One of the latter was hurling a missile over the heads of the other two, who were bending their bows to repel the assault. On the right wall of the apartment the figures were much defaced, but I traced the outline of a chariot with horses. The trappings of the steeds seem to have been of a most costly

Digitized by Google

description, and were well executed. A neck ornament, which resembled in form a tassel, had each thread distinctly marked. In front of the chariot was a quiver with arrows.

From the hall, we entered a passage or gallery, which had formerly been adorned with sculptures, the remains of which were adhering to the earth. To the right of this gallery, we entered a second apartment, containing three figures in long robes, the borders of which were adorned with rich fringes. Returning to the gallery, we explored it to the farthest extremity, and arrived at the entrance to another large apartment, on each side of which were two quadruped sphinxes, with large wings. On one of these, I observed a long cuneiform inscription. To the right of the entrance was the figure of a man with the head of an eagle or hawk, which has since been supposed to represent the God Assarac or Nisroch. The sphinxes were in an excellent state of preservation, and bore the marks of colouring.

Returning towards the entrance hall, we explored a passage to our right, the two first tablets in which were covered with inscriptions. We found here a group of captives with chains round their ancles, kneeling before a figure in royal robes. Behind these was another company of prisoners erect and in chains.

Digitized by Google

The upper part of the tablet was defaced, so that all the figures were headless. I thought, as I gazed upon them, that they might have represented the captives led away by Sennacherib from Syria and Palestine. Major Rawlinson supposes that a monarch named Sargon was the founder of Khoorsabad, and this appellation is found in Isaiah, and is thought to have been applied to Sennacherib.*

Passing onwards, we entered another large chamber, on the left hand wall of which were two warriors on horseback. To the right we found a tablet representing two horsemen with lances, preceding a chariot, in which were two figures, but the whole was very much defaced. In a passage to the right of the chamber, was the figure of a warrior in a chariot, the two horses of which were led by attendants. Above this group were several inscriptions. Along this gallery, the earth on each side was largely mingled with fragments of stone.

We returned to the large apartment, and proceeded along the left hand gallery, where we found nothing except earth, and pieces of the broken tablets which had adhered to it. We retraced our steps and came to another gallery leading off to the left. In this we saw several defaced figures in long robes, with inscrip-

* Isaiah, xx. i.

Digitized by Google

tions above, and in some cases underneath, the groups. A little farther on, we found three figures in long robes, a warrior in a chariot, with slaves leading the horses, and a great number of inscriptions. We had now reached the extremity of the excavation, and were obliged to return.

With his usual kindness and liberal feeling, M. Botta had permitted my Russian friend to take copies of the inscriptions, and we set to work damping large sheets of brown paper, which we pasted as it were on the tablets, pressing them down as much as possible, and then allowing them to dry. By this means we succeeded in obtaining impressions of nearly all the inscriptions; after which we returned to M. Botta's temporary house, where we found every accommodation had been provided for us.

The use of the cuneiform character seems to have been common to the ancient Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Persians. It was in these letters that the Babylonian sages recorded their astronomical observations; and the Assyrian monarchs, their triumphs, and warlike exploits. Herodotus mentions two columns set up by Darius at the entrance of the Bosphorus, on one of which was recorded in Greek, and on the other in Assyrian characters, the names of all the nations

Digitized by Google

who served in his expedition. These pillars were carried off by the Byzantines, who, after the usual Greek manner, despised the monuments of barbarians, and used the stone for building an altar to Diana. One of the tablets was left near the temple of Bacchus, a short distance from Byzantium.* It is probable that these Assyrian letters were the cuneiform characters, since we find them used by the ancient Persians at Persepolis. After the Macedonian conquest, the Greek language and characters displaced the wedge-formed writing, and even the sages of Chaldea, if we may judge from the example of Berosus, found it necessary to study and to use the dialect of their rulers.

M. Botta met with much opposition in the course of his researches. Mohammed Pasha showed himself decidedly hostile to his undertaking, and while he received him with smiles and good wishes, he sent private intelligence to Constantinople, that the French Consul was building a fort. The Cadi and Mufti of Mosul were not slow in aiding and abetting any project that might irritate and annoy the misbeliever. They stirred up the people of Khoorsabad to remonstrate, and these poor peasants, who would gladly

* Herod. lib. iv. cap. 87.

Digitized by Google

have sold the whole of their miserable huts twenty times over, were made to utter fine sounding and pathetic appeals against the wicked Frank who was undermining their mud cabins.

Fortunately, however, for M. Botta, he obtained all the support and assistance which his government could afford him. When the success of his excavations was communicated to the Académie Francaise by M. Mohl, that learned body applied at once to the Minister of Public Instruction, and obtained for M. Botta the grant of ample funds to meet all necessary expenses, together with the valuable aid of an artist, M. Flandin, who was directed to proceed to Mosul, and take sketches of such sculptures and inscriptions as seemed unlikely to bear removal.

Most heartily do I wish that it was in my power to commend a similar act of liberality on the part of the British Government towards Mr. Layard, but this active and enterprising traveller, after having made discoveries double the value of those at Khoorsabad, has been left to experience the same coldness and neglect which have rewarded every English discoverer since the days of Belzoni. With the exception of Sir Stratford Canning, whose liberality and good feeling on this and other occasions, cannot be

Digitized by Google

too highly praised, I have heard of no English official who seems to have taken the slightest interest in the labours by which Mr. Layard has enriched our national museum.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER V.

Remarks on Assyrian History.

The early history of the Assyrian empire seems involved in great obscurity, while even with regard to the later period of its existence, few writers agree among themselves. The history of Ctesias bears evident marks of falsehood, although it is probable that all he relates is not entirely void of foundation. Herodotus is a safer guide, but the particulars which he furnishes are necessarily few, as he seems to have compiled a separate history of the Assyrians, which has unfortunately been lost. In making a few remarks therefore, on the foundation of Nineveh, and other matters connected with the rise and decline of that great nation of which it was the capital, I must

Digitized by Google

be considered as one who is groping his way through a region full of darkness and obscurity, and is often in danger of mistaking shadows for realities.

The etymology of the name Nineveh, seems, in some degree, to indicate its vicinity to the mountains of Armenia, on which the ark rested after the deluge. The first syllable, nin or nun, implies in the Semitic languages, any floating substance, and was, for that reason, used afterwards to signify a fish. The suffix, neveh or nooh, has generally the signification of a resting place or habitation, whence we may consider the name Nineveh as indicating the rest of the floating vessel or of the ark. It is likely that the sons of Noah would erect some memorial of their escape on their descent into the plains; and Asshur, who completed, or perhaps founded Nineveh, could hardly select a more appropriate title for his new city. The attempt to identify Ninus with Nimrod, must do violence to all chronology, even if we admitted the plea urged by some—that Nimrod founded Nineveh, and that its appellation was taken from his Assyrian name, Nin or Nun.

It must not be concealed, indeed, that some have read Genesis x. 11, as if it referred to the going forth of Nimrod into the land of Asshur. Jonathan Ben Uzziel in his Targum, renders the verse thus: "And

Digitized by Google

Nimrod having gone out from that land, reigned in Assyria because he was unwilling to join himself with the builders of the tower (of Babel) and to agree with them: wherefore God prospered him, and in the place of the four cities which he had left, he gave him four other ones, namely, Nineveh, Resen, Rehoboth, and Calah."*

Yet it seems more probable to imagine that Asshur, from whom the region called afterwards Athoor or Assyria, evidently takes its name, was the person who founded this city, more especially as he lived a generation earlier than Nimrod; the beginning or capital of whose kingdom was Babel. And here it may be worthy of enquiry whether the Babel of Genesis is the same city, or occupies the same locality with the Babylon of a later period. The similarity of the names will not prove an identity of position, since we know that there existed a Babel or Babylon in Egypt. It would certainly seem more natural that the descendants of Noah should have settled themselves near to the mountains on which the ark rested, than that they should have emigrated three hundred miles through arid and desolate plains, to the site of the later Babylon. Admitting the identity of the plain of Shinar with that of Sinjar, the northern

* Targum on Genesis, c. x.

Digitized by Google

position of which seems to be established by the Karnak Tablet,* we may fairly infer that the Babel of Genesis occupied a position farther north than that region which was afterwards known by the name of Chaldea.

In the course of a journey from Nisibis to Jezirah, I passed a small village not far from the latter, which still bears the name of Babeel. It stands in the plain which extends to the south of Nisibis, and to which the Arabian geographers apply the title of Sinjar. Within a day's journey from the mountains, it is not improbable that the sons of Noah might have pitched their tents on this fertile plain, where their descendants afterwards built a city on which was conferred subsequently the appropriate title of Babel, or confusion. The early emigrants from the plain of Shinar, who colonized Egypt, carried with them the recollection of the cause of their exile, and erected in their new country another Babel which might recall the memory of Shinar.

The Babel of a later period seems to have been founded by Semiramis†; nor does this view appear

* Saenkara or Shinar is placed next to the Ruten or Cappadocians among the conquests of Sethos I. They are all described as Northern nations, an expression which would hardly apply to a territory south of Mosul.

† Philo-Byzantius apud Leo Allat. de Septem Mirac, Orb. cap.

Digitized by Google

at all repugnant to the testimony of Scripture. In Isaiah xxiii, 13, it is said, "Behold the land of the Chaldeans, this people was not till the Assyrians founded it for them that dwelt in the wilderness, they set up the towers thereof, they raised up the palaces thereof." This passage must refer to the foundation of a city, nor do we know any city of the Chaldeans which more fully answers to the above description, than the later Babel or Babylon.

Nor does it seem probable from the words of Scripture that the Babel mentioned in Genesis, survived for any length of time the confusion of languages and the dispersion of mankind. It is expressly stated that they left off to build the city*, while all traditions agree in affirming that the first Babel was destroyed by a storm. In no place do we read of Babel as a kingdom until the time of Hezekiah. A king of Shinar is mentioned Gen. xiv, 1; while in the Karnak Tablet, references are perpetually made to kings or chiefs of Saenkara (Shinar), but the name of Babel does not occur. It appears likely, then, that the Babel of Genesis was either destroyed or left unfinished soon after the dispersion, and that the plains of

v. p. 110. Quintus Curtius, liv. v. i. Ammian. Marcellin. xxiii. 6. Diod. Sic. ii. 7.

† Gen. xi. 8.

Digitized by Google

Sinjar and of Nineveh, with perhaps all the northern parts of Mesopotamia, were included in the kingdom of Shinar, which formed the germ of the Assyrian empire. It is probable that Nimrod succeeded Asshur in the government of this kingdom, and greatly extended its boundaries. He may be considered as the founder of the first dynasty of the Assyrian kings, and was probably afterwards deified under the title of Nisroch, which signifies not only an eagle, but a hawk, a bird which, being used in the chase, typified the ruling passion of the "mighty hunter."

An interval of 1098 years seems to have intervened between the foundation of Nineveh, and the first rise of the Assyrian empire to the dominion of Upper Asia, which is mentioned by Herodotus.* According to the common chronology, the building of Nineveh is placed in B.C. 2304. The period during which the Assyrian Empire exercised a supreme influence over Asia, embraced, according to Herodotus, five hundred and twenty years, while the duration of the Median rule, commencing at the destruction of Nineveh, and enduring till the time of Cyrus, is reckoned by the same authority at one hundred and fifty years.† The first year of Cyrus is computed to be B.C. 536, to

* Herod. lib. i. cap. 95.

† Ibid.

Digitized by Google

which we must add the united periods of the Assyrian and Median sway. These amount to six hundred and seventy years, which, if added to the era of Cyrus, bring the first rise of the Assyrian power to B.C. 1206, a period which synchronizes as nearly as possible with the statement of Major Rawlinson, which places the sudden aggrandisement of the Assyrian Empire in the twelfth or thirteenth century before the Christian era.

The Assyrian kings mentioned in Scripture are five in number, and they all flourished at the close of the period mentioned by Herodotus. Their names and the dates when they began to reign, are as follows :—

Pul, B.C. 771.
Tiglath Pileser, B.C. 747.
Shalmaneser, B.C. 728.
Sennacherib, B.C. 714.
Esarhaddon, B.C. 710.

Of these monarchs, it is probable that the former, Pul, was the same as the Asser adanpul, or Sardanapalus the first, mentioned by Major Rawlinson as distinguished from Sardanapalus the second, or Esar Haddon, the last king of Nineveh mentioned in Scripture. Asser Adan Pul is described in the inscriptions as the builder of the N. W. palace at Nimroud, and the

Digitized by Google

ruler over many districts in Syria, Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Armenia, the country between the two Zabs, and the lower regions near the Persian Gulf. The gods whom he worshipped, Assarac, Beltis, Ani, and Dagon, are then alluded to, and Major Rawlinson seems disposed to identify Assarac with the Nisroch of Scripture. We find from the inscriptions on some votive bulls and lions, that Sardanapalus soon after passed the great desert into Syria, and received the tribute of Tyre and Sidon, of Akarra (Acre), of Gubul, and of Arvad. All this corresponds remarkably with the acts of Pul, as recorded in 2 Kings. He is the first Assyrian king mentioned in Scripture, and he seems to have invaded Syria and Phœnicia, and to have subdued the northern parts of Palestine: Menahem, king of Israel, paid him tribute, after which he returned to his own dominions.

This Pul, Pal, or Sardanapalus the first, seems to have been the Bel or Belus of the Babylonians; the letters P. and B. being frequently interchanged in Semitic languages. To this Belus many persons in the time of Quintus Curtius ascribed the building of Babylon.* His name is thus brought in contact with

* Quint. Curt., Lib. 5. In his description of Babylon he mentions that a king of Syria constructed the hanging gardens for the use of his wife. If for Syria we read Assyria, two names often confounded, this assertion may support the hypothesis advocated above.

Digitized by Google

that of Semiramis, who is mentioned by other writers as the foundress of that city. It seems likely that Pul was the Ninus of the Greeks, the more especially as Herodotus, the only trustworthy historian of these matters, places but five generations between Nitocris, the queen of Nebuchadnezzar, and Semiramis. But Nebuchadnezzar was the son of Baladan, the first king of Babylon, who attained that dignity by conspiring with Arbaces the Mede against Asser adanpal, Sardanapalus II., or Esarhaddon, as he is termed in Scripture.* From Nebuchadnezzar, therefore, to the period of Pul, were exactly five generations, namely, Baladan, Esarhaddon, Sennacherib, Shalmaneser, and Tiglath Pileser. The assertions of Herodotus are peculiarly entitled to respect, as he is supposed to have written a history of Assyria, and to have derived his information exclusively from Chaldean sources. The simplicity of that venerable and veracious historian placed him far above the conceited

"Asser adanpal" and "Esarhaddon" are too much alike to need any attempt at identification. The similarity of the names show that the Greek Sardanapalus, whom all profane historians agree was the last king of Assyria, and the Esarhaddon of Scripture are one and the same person. Shortly after the accession of the latter is mentioned, we read of Merodach Baladan, King of Babylon, the Belesis of profane history. The conjectures of Prideaux and others, who have considered Tiglath Pileser to be the same person as Arbaces the Mede, seem unnatural, and destitute of any solid foundation.

Digitized by Google

ignorance of many of his countrymen, who affected to despise the records of barbarians, even when they were writing their history. As for Ctesias, his propensity for fiction was so well known that not even his contemporaries could trust him.

It seems likely that Pul commenced the erection of a city in the province of Babylonia, of which he left the completion to his wife Semiramis. After his death he was worshipped under the name of Bel, a very different divinity from the Baal of the Ammonites and Western Syria, and with whom the chief of the Babylonian Pantheon must not be confounded.

The new city was peopled by the Chasdim or Chaldeans, wandering tribes who had hitherto inhabited the northern parts of Arabia, and the plains of Mesopotamia. They seem to have possessed, however, several cities in the land of Naharaim, as Ur is named after them in Genesis, and probably Haran was inhabited by a people of the same race. Yet there appears strong reason to believe that the majority of the Chasdim retained the nomadic habits of their forefathers until the building of Babylon.

Major Rawlinson alludes also to Temen-bar the second, who appears to have reigned after Sardanapalus the first. The annals of this monarch's reign

Digitized by Google

are engraved on the black obelisk now in the British Museum, upon the two large bulls in the centre palace of Nimroud, and on the sitting figure discovered at Kalah Shergat.

After the mention of the Assyrian gods, Assarac, Ani, Nit, Artank, Beltis, Shemir, and Bar, the monarch proceeds to describe his conquests. He crossed the Euphrates, and subdued great portions of Syria Proper and Asia Minor. In the ninth year of his reign, he leads an expedition southward to Babylonia, his design being probably to carry on the building of Babylon, which was certainly not finished till the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. He marches also to the eastward against the Arii, the Persians, and the Medes; and, on two other occasions, sends his general, Tetarasser, to wage war on the same nations. Herodotus informs us that the Medes were called anciently Arii, and that they derived their other appellation from Medea, the celebrated Princess of Colchis.*

From the terms in which he describes their contests with the Assyrians, it would seem that they revolted from the latter towards the close of their Asiatic supremacy; after which, other nations following their example, the Assyrian Empire was

* Herod. Lib. i. 101.

ASHMOLEAN OXFORD MUSEUM

Digitized by Google

weakened and finally destroyed. There seems, therefore, no improbability in ascribing to Tiglath Pileser the Median conquests of Temen-bar. The name of the general, Tetarasser, may be the same as that of Tartan, alluded to in Isaiah xx. 1 as an officer of Sargon, king of Assyria. Sargon is mentioned by Major Rawlinson as the appellation of the monarch who built Khoorsabad. If the latter is identical with the Sargon of Isaiah, he is probably the same as Sennacherib.

Upon the whole, I see little reason for supposing that any of the sculptures or inscriptions lately discovered, are more than a century older than the reign of Pul or Sardanapalus the first. Nor am I disposed to agree with Major Rawlinson that these memorials are wholly unconnected with the later Assyrian sovereigns mentioned in Scripture. I have read carefully the report of his paper in the "Athenæum," but I have not been able to discover any single argument to prove that any one of the inscriptions or sculptures are older than the period alluded to. If they are, we must be driven to the alternative of supposing that the Assyrian monarchs invaded Syria and the Holy Land before the time of Pul, a fact which is utterly irreconcilable with Scripture history.

The last of the Assyrian kings was Sardanapalus II.,

Digitized by Google

the Esarhaddon of the Bible. He seems to have been a prince of effeminate and vicious habits, if we may trust the report of Ctesias. In the midst of his concubines, the successor of Semiramis devoted himself to the study of female arts and accomplishments. He excelled in spinning, and the mysteries of the toilette, and joined to his unmanly affectation of female manners, the grossest and most disgusting vices. An inscription, composed by himself, and inscribed it is said on the gates of his sepulchre, betrays the low sensuality of an ignoble mind.

On one occasion the Median satrap, Arbaces, was admitted on important business to the presence of his sovereign. He encountered a being whose habits and demeanour appeared those of one who could scarcely be called a man. With painted cheeks and lisping accents the monarch treated the grave affairs of state as of less importance than the proper management of a spindle, and the indignant satrap withdrew in anger and contempt from the presence of one whom he felt himself degraded in serving. He communicated his discontent and his hopes to Baladan, who then ruled the province of the Chasdim and the rising city of Babylon. The two satraps combined their forces and besieged Nineveh, where Esarhaddon was indulging his passions and his vices in voluptuous security.

Digitized by Google

He found himself deserted by his allies, and, after some vain attempts to repulse the rebels, he constructed a large and spacious pile, on which, surrounded by his wives and concubines, the last king of Assyria met his death amid the flames which his own hand had kindled.*

It does not seem, however, that the destruction of Nineveh followed the taking of the city by the Chaldeans and the Medes. The two satraps shared the dominions of Esarhaddon between them; Arbaces taking the northern provinces, while Baladan seized upon the southern territory of the old Assyrian empire. Arbaces, himself a native of Media, seems to have removed the seat of government to Ecbatana, leaving the city of the Assyrian monarchs to fall into partial decay.

Arbaces, who may be considered the same as the Deioces of Herodotus, appears to have confined his conquests to the northern parts of Persia and Mesopotamia. A war with the Cadusii, or Kurds, is mentioned by Ctesias, and it is probable that some time after the death of Sardanapalus the mountaineers allied themselves to the inhabitants of Nineveh, and withdrew from the Median rule. Phraortes, the son of Deioces, is said by Herodotus to have marched

* Diod. Siculus, Lib. xi. 23.

Digitized by Google

against Nineveh, during the siege of which he perished. After his death, Cyaxares, his son and successor, waged war against the Lydians, and subdued the whole of Asia beyond the Halys. He also besieged Nineveh, being desirous of destroying so powerful a city, and of avenging his father's death. He was compelled, however, to raise the siege on account of the incursions of the Scythians, who seem to have pursued him into Media.

After the Scythian war it is probable that Cyaxares again laid siege to Nineveh, and utterly destroyed this once flourishing metropolis of the Assyrian kings. The Median power continued to increase till it was finally absorbed in that of Persia, the monarchs of which latter country soon became paramount in Asia.

The decay of Nineveh must have been very rapid, since, in the time of the younger Cyrus, Xenophon seems to have passed close by its site, yet not even the name of the once mighty city appears to have survived its downfall. He only mentions a ruined town called Mespila, which probably the Medes had erected in the neighbourhood. Yet, according to Tacitus, Ninus or Nineveh was a city worthy of being captured even in the days of Claudius.

After the death of Alexander, and the division of his

Digitized by Google

Asiatic dominions, Athoor, or the region of Nineveh, seems to have remained under the dominion of the Seleucidæ until the establishment of the Parthian Empire. The kings of Parthia, or rather their lieutenants, maintained their ground in Assyria with varied success till the foundation of the kingdom of Adiabene, which dates its commencement from the Mithradatic wars. Plutarch, in his life of Lucullus, mentions a king of Adiabene who allied himself with Tigranes against the Romans. His dominions seem to have comprised the whole of Assyria Proper, which was bounded on the north by the Gordian or Kurdish mountains, on the west by the Tigris, and on the east and south by the lower Zab.

One of the successors of this king, whose name was Monobazus, was the father of several sons by his wife Helena, but he set his affections chiefly on the youngest, Izates, a partiality which excited the jealousy of the others. Fearing that their envy would work some evil to his favourite, the king sent him, with many presents, to Abennerig, the king or chief of Charax Spasini, who gladly received and protected him, and finally gave him his daughter, Samacha, in marriage. A short time before his death, the King of Adiabene sent for his son, and bestowed upon him a province called Cæron, or Carræ, where

Digitized by Google

it is said the remains of the ark were still at that time preserved. In this country, Izates continued in peace till his father's death, when, by the unanimous voice of the nobles of Adiabene, he was proclaimed king.

While Izates resided at the court of Abennerig he was converted to the Jewish religion, which soon after his mother, Helena, also embraced, and became remarkable for her zeal and devotion. She had no sooner seen her son quietly established in his kingdom than she determined to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and to take up her abode there.

When she arrived at the Holy City, she found that a great famine prevailed in the country of Judea, which is, indeed, supposed to be the scarcity predicted by Agabus in Acts xi. 28. The queen immediately sent to Alexandria and to Cyprus to purchase great quantities of provisions, which, when they arrived at Jerusalem, she distributed among all those who needed assistance. Izates also despatched large sums of money to the chief men among the Jews about the same time.

The sincerity of the king's religious views was shown by one of his first actions after his accession to the throne of Adiabene. At the death of his father, Monobazus, the children of the deceased monarch had

Digitized by Google

been placed in confinement, according to the usual Parthian and Persian custom. Izates not only released them, but expressed his deep sorrow that they had been subjected to this treatment, for which he endeavoured to atone by the consideration with which he afterwards behaved towards them.

During the early part of the reign of Izates, Artabanus, King of Parthia, finding that his nobles had conspired against him, left Ctesiphon, and took refuge in the territory of Adiabene. This proud monarch, who styled himself in all his epistles the King of Kings, advanced to meet Izates with the air of a suppliant, Dismounting from his horse, he made a low obeisance, and intreated in the humblest terms protection and support as from a brother monarch. The generous Adiabenian was no sooner aware of the quality and misfortunes of his guest, than he leaped from his horse, which he compelled the royal exile to mount, while he himself escorted him on foot to his palace. During his stay in Adiabene, Artabanus was treated with all the consideration which his rank demanded; the upper place at festivals was conceded to him, and all the sympathy which a generous mind could exhibit to depressed and fallen royalty was freely bestowed.

Nor did Izates neglect to employ more active

Digitized by Google

measures in behalf of his friend and ally. By his mediation the Parthians were induced again to receive their sovereign, and the grateful Artabanus soon departed for his own kingdom, having conferred on his host and benefactor the most substantial tokens of his regard. The King of Adiabene received the permission of the Parthian monarch to wear his tiara upright, and to sleep on a golden bed, while the rich province of Nisibis was bestowed upon him, to furnish the means of supporting his new dignities.

After the death of Artabanus, the kingdom of the Parthians became a prey to intestine troubles. Gotarzes, the son of the late king, seized upon the throne, but met with a warm opposition from his brother, Bardanes, who at length succeeded in inducing him to give up his claims to the crown and to retire into Hyrcania. He soon, however repented of his act, and raised forces, with which he marched against Bardanes, but was defeated, and obliged to fly. Elated with his victory, Bardanes behaved himself with such haughtiness and cruelty to his subjects that they conspired against him, and he was assassinated during a hunting expedition. He had previously denounced war against Izates, being provoked that he would not join him in an intended expedition against the Romans.

Digitized by Google

Gotarzes now mounted the Parthian throne, but he becoming in his turn obnoxious to his subjects, some of them called in Meherdates, the grandson of a former King Phraates, who had been despatched as an hostage to Rome. The Parthian Ambassadors appeared before the Senate, and in a pathetic oration deplored the miseries of their country, devastated by civil contests, and the extinction of the line of their ancient kings.

The Senate was pleased to grant Meherdates to their prayers, being doubtless by no means unwilling to excite or continue dissensions which prevented the Parthians from turning their arms against the Roman dominions in the East. In a long oration, the Emperor Claudius addressed the Ambassadors and the Parthian Prince, who was himself present in the august assembly, inculcating on the latter the necessity of ruling his dominions with moderation and justice, while he warned the former of the danger of frequent changes, and insinuated the policy of sometimes complying with the humours of their kings. He concluded by remarking that the Romans, satiated with military glory, desired nothing more than to see universal peace pervading all foreign nations. Caius Cassius, the Governor of Syria, was charged to escort the young Prince as far as the banks of the Euphrates,

Digitized by Google

which office he fulfilled satisfactorily, and dismissed him with just and reasonable counsels, which, however, Meherdates did not afterwards follow.

This aspirant to the Parthian throne having wasted both time and opportunity by unseasonable delays, at length crossed the Tigris, and marched through the territory of Adiabene. Izates had openly professed himself in his favour, though he seems to have carried on at the same time a secret correspondence with Gotarzes. It appears, however, that the forces of Meherdates captured the city of Ninus, which still seems to have been large enough to be occupied as a military post.*

Izates and Akbar, King of the Arabians,† soon deserted the cause of the Parthian Pretender, who shortly after was defeated in battle by Gotarzes, who spared his life, but commanded that his ears should be cut off.

The success which had attended the affairs of Izates, and the virtues which distinguished him, produced a favourable effect on his brother, Monobazus, and his other kindred. Ascribing his good fortune to the religion which he professed, they determined also to become proselytes to the Jewish faith. But this in-

* Tacit. Annal., Lib. xii. Josephus Antiq., Lib. xx.

† This prince was probably the Agbarus of Ecclesiastical history.

Digitized by Google

tention of theirs having greatly displeased the great men of the country, the latter formed a league against them, and endeavoured to enlist in their cause Abia, King of the Arabians, who, for the sake of a large bribe that had been promised him, marched against Izates.

The king of Adiabene prepared to repel the invaders, but soon discovered the domestic treason of some of his nobles, who had agreed that during the conflict they would take to flight, and thus throw into disorder the ranks of Izates. These traitors having met with the punishment they deserved, their sovereign marched against the Arabians, whom he defeated with great slaughter; after which Abia fearing to fall into the hands of the enemy, fell upon his own sword, and expired in the fortress of Arsum, where he had taken refuge after the battle.

But the nobles of Adiabene still maintaining their aversion to the royal family, despatched messengers to solicit the aid of the Parthian King Volagases, the grandson of Gotarzes. The ambassadors complained that their sovereign had departed from the laws and customs of his forefathers, and was endeavouring to introduce Jewish customs. It is not improbable that Izates had become a Christian, as about this time the Gospel was promulgated with great success in

Digitized by Google

Mesopotamia by St. Thomas, St. Bartholomew and Adæus. The Jewish religion was not a creed that sought to obtain converts among the heathen, nor indeed, did it provoke that hostility which we find was always excited by the preaching of Christianity. On the other hand, the first teachers of the Gospel used every effort to extend the empire of the Church, nor is it unlikely, that their active zeal would produce feelings of the most bitter hostility, among people who adhered with superstitious firmness, to the tenets of their fathers.

The king of Parthia lent a favourable ear to the complaints of the malcontents of Adiabene, and after sending an embassage to Izates to demand back those privileges which Artabanus had bestowed, he determined in the event of a refusal, to make it the pretext for war. The king of Adiabene who had penetrated the designs of the Parthian, not only refused to accede to his demand, but prepared immediately for an invasion. He placed his family in a strong fortress, and having well garrisoned the citadels of his dominions, he awaited the advance of the Parthians.

Volagases in the meantime, had pitched his tents on the banks of a river which separated Adiabene from Media. He dispatched an ambassador to Izates,

Digitized by Google

who was charged with a message that breathed all the lofty arrogance of the Parthian Kings. The Envoy dwelt upon the greatness of his master, and the magnitude of his dominions which extended from the river Euphrates, even to Bactria, while with an impious boldness he insulted the religion professed by Izates, and declared almost in the language of Rab Shakeh, the inability of the God of Israel, to oppose the power of the great king.

The reply of Izates to these menaces was calm and dignified. While he acknowledged the extent of territory which was subject to the Parthian monarch, the valour of his nation, and the multitude of his troops, he reminded the messenger that the power of God was greater than that of man, and professed his determination to await with hope and confidence, the decision of Heaven.

The Envoy of Volagases took his departure, and Izates, clothed in sackcloth, devoted himself, with his family, to fasting and supplication. The night after, Volagases having received intelligence that the Dahæ and Sacæ had made an inroad into Parthia during his absence, retired back to his own dominions.

After a reign of twenty-four years, the wise and virtuous Izates was buried in the sepulchre of his fathers, and was succeeded by his elder brother

Digitized by Google

Monobazus, who had distinguished himself by his affectionate loyalty to the late sovereign. The mournful news reached the aged Helena, in her pious retreat at Jerusalem, from which she hastened with many lamentations to Adiabene, where she soon afterwards expired. Monobazus caused her bones, and those of his deceased brother, to be transported to Jerusalem, and buried in the Pyramids, which his mother had erected during her residence at the holy city.

From the death of Izates, we find no mention of the kingdom of Adiabene until the time of Trajan, when the Adiabenians, with their King Mebarsapes, joined Chosroes, King of Persia, against the Romans.* Mebarsapes was, however, driven from his dominions, and obliged to take refuge in Arabia, but soon after succeeded in effecting a peace, and seems to have returned to his kingdom. Another long interval of silence occurs respecting the affairs of this country, and we hear nothing of Adiabene till the reign of Sapor II, King of Persia, who was contemporary with the Emperors Constans, Julian, and Jovian, and persecuted the Christians of Persia with great severity. Most of the inhabitants of Adiabene had by this time embraced the doctrines of the Gospel, and Arbela was

* Dio. in Trajan.

Digitized by Google

the seat of a Christian bishop. The Adiabenians are mentioned in Ecclesiastical history, as having withstood, with noble constancy, the efforts of their persecutors, and several bishops and priests watered with their blood the plains of ancient Assyria.*

The kingdom of Adiabene had now become a province of the Persian empire, and the very name of Nineveh was for a long period buried in obscurity. The Caliphs having subdued Persia, seem to have added Mosul and the vicinity to their dominions, among which it remained until the fall of Baghdad, and the rise of the Ottoman power.

I have thus endeavoured, briefly, to trace the history of Nineveh, from the earliest records of its existence to the present time. Perhaps, few places that have exercised great influence over the destinies of mankind have left so little to supply materials for the historian. Yet we may reasonably hope that the labours of Major Rawlinson and others will be attended with success, and that a vast fund of information, derived from the Cuneiform inscriptions, may soon be added to the few and scanty pages, which, up to a recent period, have comprised what has been called the history of Assyria.

* Sozom. Eccl. Hist., Lib. ii. cap. 12.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VI.

Remarks on the Ecclesiastical History of the Chaldeans.

At the period of the birth of Christ, the various religions professed by the inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Assyria, and Chaldea, were as numerous as the nations or races, which composed the mixed population of those countries. The professors of the ancient system of idolatry which had prevailed before the Persian conquest were mingled with the followers of the Magi. The sacred groves that concealed from public view the mysteries of the Assyrian Venus were planted at the foot of the mountain, on whose lofty summit arose the fire temple of the image-hating Persians, while the simple synagogue of the Jew confronted the Grecian temple, adorned by the taste of the descendants of the Macedonian conquerors.

Digitized by Google

The worship of the sun, and of the heavenly bodies, seems to have been the most prevalent form of idolatry in the Mesopotamian plains, while the opinions of the Magians respecting the evil nature of matter, the necessity of bodily mortification, and the continual conflict between the principles of good and evil, were certainly received by numerous votaries, and formed the germ of that heresy, which, under the name of Gnosticism, impeded the progress of the early Christian church.

Nor was the Hebrew system without numerous representatives among the dwellers in Mesopotamia and Assyria. The Jews had met with signal favour and encouragement from the monarchs of Persia, and large numbers of them had preferred remaining at Babylon and Susa, to returning with Zorobabel to the land of their fathers. There seems strong reason for supposing that many accompanied the Macedonian conqueror in his eastern expedition, and were allotted equal privileges with his Grecian followers. At a later period we find Izates, a powerful prince, making an open profession of Judaism, and inducing a large number of the chief men of Adiabene to imitate his example. At the day of Pentecost we read of strangers from Parthia, Media, Persia, and Mesopotamia, assembled to celebrate the festival of the

Digitized by Google

Passover at Jerusalem, and numbered afterwards among the hearers of the Apostles. Some of these doubtless became converts to the new faith, and diffused among their countrymen after their return, the knowledge of the principles which they had imbibed.

The three Magi who had been miraculously guided to the humble stable of Bethlehem, where they saw and adored the infant Saviour, are reckoned by the Chaldeans among their earliest missionaries; nor does this tradition seem entirely void of probability. Other Oriental writers record that St. Peter, St. Thomas, St. Bartholomew, and St. Matthew, propagated among the Chaldeans the tenets of the Divine Saviour.*

But the first town of any note on the eastern bank of the Euphrates which received the teaching of the Apostles, appears to have been the city of Edessa, the ancient Ur and the modern Urfa. During the lifetime of the Saviour, a chieftain of the name of Agbarus or Akbar occupied this city, and its adjoining territory. Moved by the reports which he had received of the miracles of a great Jewish teacher, he is said to have dispatched an epistle to our Lord, offering to afford him a safe asylum from the malice of

* Assem., tom. iii.

Digitized by Google

the Jews. Writers of no small note have affirmed that the Saviour returned him a gracious answer, accompanied by his picture, and the intimation that an Apostle should be sent to him after the Resurrection to instruct him more fully in the way of truth.

I shall not enter upon the frequently discussed question, as to whether such an event did really take place, yet it must be remembered that Eusebius who relates it, professes to have derived his information from documents preserved in the public archives of the city.* At the present day, a spring is pointed out in the neighbourhood of Urfah, into which, it is said, the picture was thrown at the time of the Mohammedan conquest, and even at Aleppo I found bottles of water which had been brought thence as a remedy against sickness.

It is certain that a short time after the day of Pentecost, St. Thaddeus, one of the Seventy, preached the Gospel at Edessa, accompanied by his disciples Aghæus or Adæus, and Mares.† Their mission met with great success, the king Akbar and his court

* Euseb. Eccl. Hist., Lib. i. c. 13.

† The Oriental writers mention two persons of the name of Thaddeus, to one of whom they give the appellation of Adæus, which is probably only a corruption of Aghæus. They seem to have confused the labours of St. Thaddeus with those of his disciple. Vide Assem, tom. iii.

Digitized by Google

embraced Christianity, and Edessa became the chief school or university of the Christian teachers in the East.

From Edessa the Missionaries extended their spiritual conquests to Assyria, and Chaldea. Nisibis and the regions beyond the Tigris were visited by them, and Mares, one of the disciples of Thaddeus, received from the hands of St. Thomas, the Episcopal office, and the charge of the See of Seleucia, a city which derived its being and its name from the Macedonian Seleucidæ.

The accounts of the Apostolical labours of Thomas, Nathanuel, and Bartholomew are varied and frequently confused, yet it seems certain that before the close of the first century, a large and increasing number of Christians occupied the plains of Mesopotamia, and the great cities of Amida, Nisibis, Arbela, and Seleucia. The faith had also made great progress in Persia, as the Parthian monarchs who governed it at that period seem to have been by no means intolerant, most probably because they were not professors of the dominant Magi n creed.

At the commencement of the second century, Abraham, the second in succession from Mares, presided over the church at Seleucia. During his time a violent persecution was excited against the Chris-

Digitized by Google

tians of Persia by the arts of the Magi, who dreaded the encroachments of the new faith. Many martyrs perished on this occasion, but it was suspended at the intercession of Abraham, who had been recently consecrated at Antioch, Metropolitan of Seleucia. His prayers had been sought for on behalf of the king's son, who laboured under a painful and dangerous disease, but when Abraham appeared before the monarch in obedience to the royal summons, his countenance was sad and dejected. The king, whose name is said to have been Chosroes, enquired the cause of his sorrow, whereupon the bishop complained of the misfortune under which his people suffered, and exposed the injustice of their persecutors. Moved by his appeal, the monarch made a solemn promise, that if his prayers proved successful, the course of the persecution should be arrested. The intercession of Abraham is said to have procured health for the sufferer, and the grateful parent used his influence and authority to protect his Christian subjects. *

Shortly after this event, the expedition of Trajan took place, and this prince, whose hands had already been imbrued in the blood of Ignatius of Smyrna, treated the Christians of Edessa with great severity.

* Bar Hebræus apud Assem, tom. iii.

Digitized by Google

His forces overran Adiabene, Mesopotamia, and Chaldea, where he seems to have afflicted the rising churches with equal cruelty. The fact that the Eastern Christians were generally subjects to the monarchs of Persia and Parthia, rendered them objects of suspicion to the Roman government. When Achadbues, a priest of Seleucia, repaired in company with one Jabjesu to Antioch, that he might receive consecration to the Episcopal office, the fellow travellers were arrested by the Roman magistrate as Persian spies, and Achadbues escaped, by flight only, a cruel and lingering death. The unfortunate Jabjesu, with his host, were dragged before the Prætor and crucified, notwithstanding they loudly protested their innocence of any evil or treasonable intention. Achadbues succeeded in reaching Jerusalem where he obtained consecration as bishop, and returned soon after to Seleucia.

After the decease of Achadbues, his successor Sciachlupha was prevented from repairing to Antioch by the war which was then raging between the Parthians and the Romans. He was therefore consecrated by the neighbouring bishops, who had lately increased greatly in numbers, and this seems to have been the first step towards the separation of the Church of the extreme East from the Patriarchate of Antioch.

Digitized by Google

The latter see in early times possessed the chief jurisdiction over the Christians of Mesopotamia and Persia. Antioch was not only the Metropolitan city of the Roman dominions in the East, but it was the place where the disciples of Jesus had first received the cherished title of Christians. From Antioch the zealous Missionaries of the Gospel had gone forth to the remote regions beyond the Euphrates. To her the Orientals owed their rites and their doctrines, and by her judgment they regulated their decisions in questions of faith. It was natural, therefore, that during the first and second centuries, the Metropolitans of Seleucia and Persia should testify their allegiance to the Patriarch of the Syrian city, by receiving at his hands those privileges and powers, which were necessary for the due discharge of their sacred and important duties. But as time rolled on, and Christianity extended itself in Persia, and on the banks of the Tigris, it seemed incongruous that the chief bishop of a tract of country almost extra-patriarchal in extent, should continue subject to the spiritual ruler of a district far removed from the place of his residence, and with whom he had few opportunities of taking counsel, or of holding official intercourse. Nor were these difficulties diminished by the political arrangements which then prevailed. With

Digitized by Google

the exception of the Christians of Nisibis and Amida, the whole of those to whom for the sake of distinction I shall affix the title of Chaldeans, were subject to the authority of the Persian or Parthian kings. The former always looked suspiciously on the Christianity of their Chaldean subjects, as they considered it a tie of union, which bound them to their Roman foes. It must also be remembered, that the journey to Antioch from Seleucia, was not always a safe one in times of peace, as the intervening country was frequently the seat of warfare, which of course entirely intercepted all communication. It soon became evident, therefore, that the Chaldeans of the East must sooner or later withdraw themselves from a jurisdiction which afforded them much inconvenience and little benefit. Their distant position had also a tendency to prevent their feeling much sympathy with the movements or theological investigations of the Eastern Syrian Church. In their remote regions, the echo of the logical disputes of Antioch and Edessa never reached them, or, if it did, was entirely lost upon a people who lacked the subtle, curious spirit of the Asiatic Greeks. It is not improbable, therefore, that their notions were often illogical and ill digested, or that they adhered with blind fondness to antiquated forms of expression

Digitized by Google

which the perversion of Western heresy had rendered it ambiguous and dangerous to use.*

About the middle of the third century, Sapor or Shapoor I. succeeded Ardsheer or Artaxares, who was the first monarch of the Sassanides. The Persian race had now recovered the ascendancy over their Parthian rulers, and the new sovereigns felt or feigned a zeal for the ancient institutions of their country, which led them to tolerate, and perhaps encourage, the persecution of their Christian subjects.

Sapor had no sooner ascended the throne than a sanguinary war broke out between Persia and Rome. The Persian king, at the head of a large army, ravaged the Mesopotamian provinces with fire and sword, and even captured Antioch itself. He was, however, compelled speedily to retreat. The Emperor Gordian retook in the course of one campaign all that had been wrested from the Romans, and was even about to lay siege to Ctesiphon, when he was assassinated by Philip, the Arabian, who, anxious to reap the fruits of his perfidy, concluded a hasty peace with the Persians, and returned to Antioch.

In the year 250, the persecution which Decius had commenced against the Christians at Rome, penetrated to the remote region of Mesopotamia. Several

* Bar Hebræus apud Assem., tom. iii.

Digitized by Google

Persians received the crown of martyrdom during its continuance, while, to add to the calamities of the Chaldean Christians, the armies of Sapor invaded the Roman territories after the death of Decius, and the proud monarch of the East had the gratification of beholding the Emperor Valerian a captive in Persia.* The valour of Odenatus of Palmyra alone maintained the honour of Rome, and the Imperial city of the Cæsars was indebted to a Syrian for the safety of her Eastern provinces. Sapor founded to commemorate his victories, a city entitled Gandisapor, which is chiefly noted as having attracted thither several Greek physicians, who translated into the Oriental languages the medical works of Hippocrates.

The third century produced two heresiarchs, whose opinions made some progress in the East. The first of these was Paul of Samosata, who had been raised by the influence of Zenobia to the Bishopric of Antioch. He was vain, presumptuous, and self-conceited, nor did the excellence of his moral character compensate for the defects of his understanding. The hatred and disgust of his opponents may have exaggerated the charges brought against him, yet his conduct, even an impartial judge must pronounce in every respect unworthy of a Christian bishop. The heresy which

* Acta Martyr. Oriental. Pagius ad Ann. 297, apud Assemani.

Digitized by Google

he held and taught, seems to have been "That Christ and the Holy Ghost were not distinct persons in the Godhead, but merely the representatives of certain divine attributes, which it pleased God to manifest under their names, and that Jesus Christ was a mere man, upon whom the wisdom or reason of the Father descended, in order to work out certain ends." The immediate followers of Paul were not numerous, but his system lingered in the Eastern schools, and perhaps produced in many minds a scarcely perceptible bias towards the opinions which were afterwards advocated and defended by Nestorius. *

The second heresiarch alluded to was Manes or Manichæus, a Persian by birth, who endeavoured to combine the doctrines of the Gospel with the Magian Philosophy. The opinions of this person, having already been noticed at some length in the course of this work, I shall not recapitulate his tenets, which, however, at first excited some attention in Persia, where the doctrine was perhaps secretly favoured by many of the Magi. The success of his system in his native land induced the heresiarch to attempt the propagation of his errors in Mesopotamia and the parts adjacent. Some writers affirm, however, that

* Mosheim Eccles. Hist. Cent. III. Burton. Hist. of the First Three Centuries.

Digitized by Google

he was obliged to leave Persia to avoid the anger of the king, whose son he had failed in curing, after he had undertaken to restore him to health by a miracle. While in Mesopotamia he challenged Archelaus, Bishop of Cascara, to a public disputation, in which he was manifestly defeated, and returned foiled and disappointed to his native country, where the officers of the king seized and conveyed him to a royal fortress, where he was flayed alive, and perished miserably *.

At the commencement of the fourth century, the course of the Manichæan heresy had been to a certain extent arrested by the zealous endeavours of Archelaus and others, but it still continued for many centuries to retain many secret and avowed supporters in the regions of the East. The Christians of Persia enjoyed for a short time the blessings of tranquillity and peace, while their brethren in the Roman territories were suffering severely from the persecution which had lately been commenced by the Emperors Carus and Numerian. But they were soon destined to experience the same misfortunes, for the Romans, having broken the peace which Probus had made with the Persians, invaded Mesopotamia, and captured Seleu-

* Mosheim Cent, III. Photius Adversus Manichæos. Beausobre Histoire du Manicheisme.

Digitized by Google

cia, Ctesiphon, and Coche, inflicting great cruelties on the Christian inhabitants of those places.

From the nature of its position, Edessa was the first to experience the severity of the Emperor. Since the days of Agbarus, its schools had been the receptacles and the dispensers of Christian learning. Macarius gave lectures in Syriac, upon the text of Scripture, and instructed in Biblical criticism the future priests and bishops of the Syro Chaldean Church.

After the death of Carus, the Persians recovered, for a short time, the regions of Mesopotamia, but they suffered great loss towards the termination of the reign of Diocletian. Galerius concluded a peace with them, or rather a truce of forty years, by the terms of which the general Roman boundary was terminated by the Tigris, and the five provinces of Azanene, Sophene, Intilene, Zabdicene, and Corduene, situated on the eastern side of that river were ceded to Rome.*

About this time monachism was first introduced into Mesopotamia from Egypt by Aones, who seems to have been the disciple of the Syrian Hilarion. The climate of Mesopotamia, and the character of its inhabitants were favourable to the progress of the new system. The dry, arid nature of the former presented

* Assem, tom. iii. Dissertatio.

Digitized by Google

few incentives to the appetite, and rendered rigid fasting less difficult than it would have been found in colder regions, while the sober, meditative, and grave character of the Oriental inclined him to view favourably a life of contemplation. Aones soon numbered some of the most ardent, learned, and zealous of the Eastern priesthood among his followers, at the head of whom stands the celebrated James of Nisibis, whose name and actions I have alluded to in another place. *

Yet the monks of the East must not be confounded with those idle and luxurious drones who have so often excited the ridicule and contempt of Western Europe. Aones, who is also called Eugenius, employed his disciples in works of practical utility. Freed from all restraint and impediment, which the ties of matrimony, or the quiet seductions of a comfortable home, might have cast in their path, they went boldly forth to instruct the population of the most miserable villages, and the inhabitants of the steepest and most rugged mountains. Fearless of danger, they scaled the precipices of Kurdistan, and poured into the ear of the dying Carduchian the consolations of a faith which had induced them to brave all perils for the love of God and of man. With a wallet on his

* Assem, tom iii.

Digitized by Google

shoulders, and a travelling staff in his hand, the Chaldean monk, transformed at a moment's notice into a zealous and active Missionary, crossed the widest rivers, and traversed the most inhospitable plains. His home was the first cottage that afforded the shelter of its mud walls to the wandering stranger, his food the fare of the humblest peasant, his companions the rude and ignorant tillers of the earth, whose toils he lightened, and whose troubles he consoled by the bright and glorious tidings on which, with rude but touching eloquence, he loved to dilate. Such were the men who in the fourth century of the Christian Era evangelized the numerous inhabitants of Mesopotamia and Assyria, such were also their successors, who in after ages spread the triumphs of Christianity over the distant regions of Tartary, India, and China.

Shortly after the introduction of monachism into the Eastern Church, a schism took place which was provoked by the pride and intolerable arrogance of Papas, the son of Aghæus, Archbishop of Ctesiphon and Seleucia. This unworthy successor of St. Thaddeus, treated the priests and deacons of his church with indignity and contempt, while he proudly rejected the authority of the Synod, which had assembled to take cognizance of his unjust and unchristian proceedings.

Digitized by Google

Milles, Bishop of Susa, had long been noted among the Chaldeans for the purity of his doctrine, and the innocence of his life. He accosted Papas in a public assembly with all the fervour of a zealous and earnest mind—"Dost thou think," he indignantly exclaimed, "that the faults of thy brethren give thee a just right to treat them with pride and scorn? Can it be that thou deemest the words of God a fable, which teach, that he who would be chief among Christians should be the servant of all?"

Papas answered the remonstrance of the venerable bishop with derisive contempt, upon which Milles, taking from his bag the manuscript of the Gospel, placed it respectfully on a desk in the midst.

"If thou wilt not hear these words," he said, with calm dignity, "from me who am but a mortal like thyself, consult the decisions of the Evangelists, which now lay open before the eyes of thy body, though I fear they are hidden from the view of thy mind."

Almost beside himself with rage, Papas insolently advanced in the midst, and striking the holy volume with his clenched hand, he cried, in a sneering tone, "Speak, O Gospel? speak if thou canst, since verily my speech faileth me.

Penetrated with grief, the aged Milles rushed forward, overcome by emotions of horror and regret

Digitized by Google

With both hands he seized the sacred tome, covered it with kisses, and pressed it respectfully to his forehead. Then turning to Papas, he said, with deep solemnity, "Because thou hast thus shamefully treated the word of the living God, behold His angel standeth beside thee, and shall cause thy hand to wither, which has offered such insult to Him."

The historian adds that the right side of Papas was suddenly smitten with paralysis, and that he continued until the day of his death an object of astonishment and terror to many.*

Simeon succeeded the unworthy Papas in the see of Seleucia, and was present at the council of Nice, where the heresy of Arius was condemned. The creed drawn up by the bishops there assembled was generally received by the Chaldean Church, and is held by their descendants even at the present day. I shall transcribe it as it is now recited in their churches. It is entitled "The Creed that was composed by three hundred and eighteen Holy Fathers, who were assembled at Nice, a city of Bithynia, in the time of King Constantine the Pious, on account of Arius the accursed infidel.

"We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things, both visible and invisible, and in

* Bar Hebræus apud Assemani, tom. iii.

Digitized by Google

our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only begotten of His Father before all worlds, who was not created, True God of True God, of the same substance with His Father; by whose hands the worlds were made, and all things created, who for us men, and for our salvation, descended from Heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost and became man, and was conceived and born of the Virgin, and suffered and was crucified in the days of Pontius Pilate, and died and was buried, and rose on the third day according to the Scriptures, and ascended into Heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of His Father, and is again to come and judge the living and the dead.

" And we believe one Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, who proceedeth from the Father, the Spirit that giveth life.

" And in one Holy and Catholic Church.

" We acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting."

Eight years before the council sat, a violent persecution was directed by Sapor II, against those Christians who inhabited the Persian dominions. The cause of this is assigned to the malice of the Jews and Magians, who succeeded in stirring up the king against the followers of the Gospel. It is likely,

Digitized by Google

however, that motives of secular policy had some weight in the councils of Sapor. He viewed with suspicion and aversion those who held the same faith with the most deadly enemies of the Persian name; and he might, not perhaps unreasonably, consider that their journeys into the Roman dominions, though ostensibly for religious purposes, had some ulterior end in view. His patriotism impelled him to support that creed under whose auspices Persia had risen in early times to influence and dominion, while a mind thus prone to take an unfavourable view of the Gospel, was still more incensed by the complaints of the Magi, and the encroachments of the new faith.

This persecution, which lasted for nearly forty years, was one of the most grievous that had hitherto befallen the Chaldean Church. Simeon, the aged metropolitan of Seleucia, with many other bishops, and a vast number of priests and deacons, yielded up their lives amid torments of the most excruciating character. The region of Adiabene was among those places which felt most severely the effects of the monarch's rage. It was governed by a Satrap, whose name, Sennacherib, recalls the old days of the Assyrian monarchy. He equalled in cruelty, if not in greatness the renowned monarch whose name he bore. An

Digitized by Google

aged Abbot, named Matthew, had erected a monastery on the brow of a mountain, fifteen miles from Mosul, which still bears his name. In the same province Behnam, whose history has been already referred to, was distinguishing himself together with his sister by the ardent zeal with which they propagated the doctrine of Christ. Forty associates and fellow labourers made their appearance with the three above mentioned before the Persian Satrap. But the persecutors cared neither for age nor sex, and the whole body were at once dragged off to die. They suffered with patient constancy, but their blood did not quench the flame of persecution. A vast multitude of both sexes were seized, and doomed to cruel and lingering deaths.*

The expedition under Julian terminated fatally for the Romans, and by an ignominious treaty, the city of Nisibis was surrendered to the Persian monarch An innumerable crowd of citizens, among which the majority were Christians, followed the retreat of Jovian, forsaking for ever the homes where they had so long dwelt in happiness and tranquillity. One voice was raised with honest courage to rebuke the pusillanimity of the Emperor in the accents of sarcastic reproach; and the vain and arrogant Jovian was but too glad to conceal himself from the murmurs of those whom his

* Assem, tom. iii.

Digitized by Google

want of courage and conduct, had driven forth as wanderers and fugitives. *

In the year 419 of the Christian Era, and the twentieth of the reign of Yezdegerd, the rash zeal of Abdas, Bishop of Susa, provoked a renewal of the persecution. The prelate had destroyed a fire-temple belonging to the Magi, and this imprudent and indefensible action so excited the anger of the king, that he put to death the bishop and some of his presbyters, and ordered the Christian Church to be levelled with the ground. The intercession of one of his Christian officers, however, appeased his fury, but not before a small number of persons had suffered martyrdom.

Soon after the persecution had ceased, war broke out between the Romans and the Persians, on account of the protection and succour which the former had afforded to some Christian fugitives. During the hostilities which ensued, the Romans laid waste the province of Azanene, and carried with them to Amida a band of wretched captives, whose naked and miserable condition exciting the commiseration of Acacius, the bishop of that city, he sold the sacred utensils of the Church, and parted with all his own property to relieve their wants. The unhappy Persians obtained by his means a release from their bondage, and were

* Gibbon, chap. xxv.

Digitized by Google

clothed and furnished with all the necessaries that they required by the aid of the charitable prelate, whose munificent, and truly Christian benevolence had the double effect of soothing the miseries inflicted by the horrors of war and of disposing the king of Persia to regard with more good will the religion which produced such excellent fruits. *

* Gibbon, chap. xxxii. Assem. tom. iii.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VII.

Remarks on the Ecclesiastical History of the Chaldeans.

The Chaldean or Assyrian Church maintained during the first four centuries of the Christian Era, a perfect and uninterrupted communion with her sisters of Asia, Africa, and Europe, her prelates assisted in their councils, and her martyrs were gratefully mentioned in their martyrologie. But the time was now fast approaching when the bonds of union were to be severed, and discord and division prevail among those who had hitherto considered each other as brethren in the one faith.

The subject which provoked these fatal disputes was one which the wisdom and ingenuity of man can never fathom with entire satisfaction, or express with perfect intelligibility. The Incarnation of our Saviour, the process whereby a divine Being united himself to our

Digitized by Google

human nature, had from the beginning of the promulgation of Christianity excited the speculations of restless and inquisitive minds. The active subtlety of the Greek intellect had led many into heresy on this important matter, and the opinions of Apollinaris were, even at the commencement of the fifth century, troubling the peace of the Church. The councils had hitherto contented themselves with determining that Christ was very God and very man, but they had said nothing on the manner in which the mysterious union was effected. Two opposite modes of expression therefore prevailed among the Syrian and Egyptian Theologians. The former, in order to avoid the opinions of Apollinaris, who maintained that the Godhead of Christ performed in His human body the functions of a soul, were exceedingly precise in maintaining the most marked distinction between the Godhead and the manhood of the Saviour, while the latter, in their zeal against Gnosticism, seemed almost to confuse both the human and divine natures, and to blend them into one. Hitherto, however, both schools had remained at peace with each other, and although they might differ in words and terms, their differences had never been thought of sufficient importance to mar the unity of the Church. *

* Mosheim Eccl. Hist., cent. V.

Digitized by Google

Matters were in this state when Nestorius, who had been educated in the schools of Antioch and Edessa, was raised to the Patriarchate of Constantinople. The learning of the new prelate was marred by the vanity and self-conceit of his character, as well as by the bigoted intolerance which he displayed against those who differed with him in opinion. From the pulpit of the cathedral of Constantinople, he publicly called upon the Emperor to crush all heretics with the secular arm, promising him, at the same time, as an inducement, the aid of his prayers against the Persians.

Among the chief favourites of Nestorius was a presbyter named Anastasius, whose turgid and flowery discourses had procured for him great popularity. He was, like his patron, a favourer of the Syrian doctrine, and thought himself justified in attempting to attract a crowd of auditors, by introducing in his sermons sentiments which had the gloss of novelty to recommend them. The minds of the superficial and the ignorant are easily captivated by startling assertions, and the fertile brain of Anastasius, seems at last to have hit upon an expedient of satisfying at once the Patriarch's vanity and his own.

The numerous auditors who crowded the principal Church of Constantiuople, and who not unfrequently

Digitized by Google

expressed their approbation and disapproval in a mode more suitable to the circus or the theatre, were astonished beyond measure to hear from the lips of Anastasius that the term Theotokos, which had been considered Orthodox since the days of St. Athanasius, was a heretical and Apollinarian expression. The sermon of the presbyter excited some commotion, which was by no means allayed by the appearance of the Patriarch as the defender of his friend. *

The word Theotokos as applied to the Virgin Mary is scarcely susceptible of direct translation, and although sometimes rendered "Mother of God," it is better expressed by the paraphrase "She who bore Him that was God." Those who defended the use of the term, argued that Elizabeth had termed the Blessed Virgin "the mother of my Lord," and that the latter word was equally significative of the divine nature of the Saviour. They referred their opponents to the language used by St. Paul, in which he speaks without scruple of the blood of God as expressive of the close union which existed between the two natures, authorizing the interchange of the terms proper to each. To this it was answered that the word Christotokos, the bearer or mother of Christ, was the fittest designation of the Holy Virgin, since she is called

* Mosheim, cent. V. Fleury Eccl. Hist., cent. V.

Digitized by Google

constantly in the Gospel the mother of Christ, and the Deity cannot properly be said either to be born or to die.

The works of Nestorius, in which he defended his favourite opinions, were widely disseminated and eagerly perused, while a large number of the Egyptian monks declared themselves to be convinced by his arguments, and abandoned the use of the term Theotokos. This proceeding brought the matter under the notice of Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria, who censured the conduct of the monks, and commenced a written controversy with Nestorius, which terminated little to the satisfaction of either party. After much inflammatory discussion of the subject in question, it was referred to the decision of a general council, which met at Ephesus, A.D. 431. *

The bishops of Greece, Europe, and Africa, having arrived at Ephesus, they waited several days for the arrival of John, Patriarch of Antioch, with the prelates of the East. But as his coming was delayed from day to day, it seemed advisable to commence proceedings in his absence, the more particularly as the office of the different prelates did not allow them to remain for any length of time at a distance from their various spheres of duty. Cyril was chosen pre-

* Assem., tom. iii.

Digitized by Google

sident of the assembly, and opened the session by summoning Nestorius to appear before them. The Patriarch of Constantinople declined to defend himself in the presence of a partial and imperfect tribunal, and refused to make his appearance. But as he had of late written several works on the subject in debate, these were placed before the council, and the following errors were laid to his charge.

First, that he had denied the term Theotokos to the Blessed Virgin; and secondly, that he had asserted the existence of two separate and distinct persons in the Son of God. The contest, however, hinged principally on the latter assertion; for with regard to the former, the use or non-use of the particular word Theotokos was only regarded as important from its bearing on the true character of the Incarnation. The point in question, therefore, was, whether the expressions used by Nestorius on the latter mystery, were in accordance with the teaching of Scripture and the primitive Fathers. He had asserted that the Godhead dwelt in the Redeemer's human body, as in a shrine or temple, and he declared that he would never concede the title of God to one who increased daily in age by two months and three months. Other parts of his works seem even to set forth that the Divine nature did not descend upon Christ till after His birth.

Digitized by Google

The evil consequences, which might have resulted from these opinions being tolerated and encouraged in the Church, were such, that the council could scarcely do otherwise than condemn them. In an age when Theology was the one grand topic which interested men's minds, and when the fertile imaginations of the Greek doctors were but too prone to philosophize on the solemn doctrines of Christianity, it became doubly necessary that all definitions should as far as possible be free from exception. Nor did it require much foresight to perceive that the expressions of Nestorius so divided the Son of God from the Son of Man, that he impugned the divinity of Christ, and therefore struck at the very root of the doctrine of the atonement. If the Godhead dwelt merely in Christ as in a temple, He was but little exalted above those prophets upon whom it is said in the Old Testament, that the Spirit of God rested, nor could the expressions of Nestorius be reconciled with the direct teaching of the Gospel, that "the word was made flesh." *

The majority of the council had decided against him, when John of Antioch arrived. The latter seems at first to have taken part with the heresiarch, in which he was supported by the Eastern Bishops, who were naturally partial to their own countryman. But after some

* Cyril, Epist. Mosheim, cent. V. Palmer, Eccl. Hist.

Digitized by Google

serious and animated discussions, the Patriarch of Antioch was led to concur in the decision of the council, and peace and unanimity were once more restored to the Church.

The judgment put forth by the assembled bishops, and which has since been accepted by the generality of Christians, was this, "That in Christ our Lord there are two natures most closely and intimately united in one person without mixture or confusion." The almost unanimous consent to the sentence of the Ephesine Synod, which has since prevailed among all parties, is perhaps a conclusive argument in favour of its soundness and intelligibility, nor could Nestorius complain that upon the whole he was treated with injustice or partiality. Even if we admit that Cyril of Alexandria was moved by personal enmity to oppose a hated rival, it cannot be supposed that the whole of the bishops assembled, many of whom presided over dioceses in the Patriarchate of Nestorius himself, were animated by similar feelings. Yet even supposing this insinuation correct, how shall we account for the acquiescence of John of Antioch, and the Eastern bishops, who had already given the most unmistakeable proofs o their aversion to Cyril, and partiality to Nestorius.

The Nestorian controversy gave rise to another

Digitized by Google

error, into which a strong desire to avoid the sentiments of Nestorius, had propelled Eutyches, an abbot of Constantinople. This man taught that the divine and human natures of our Lord were so mingled as to form but one compounded nature, and his doctrine, after its condemnation at the Council of Chalcedon, in A.D. 451, was widely spread among the Christians of the East, many of whom also had begun to embrace the tenets of Nestorius.

The person to whom is chiefly attributable the progress of the Nestorian doctrine was one Bar Sumas, a Persian by birth, who was educated in the university of Edessa. One of the colleges there, was called, from the origin of the greater part of its scholars, the Persian school: the members of which were much attached to the writings of their former preceptors, Diodorus of Tarsus, and Theodore of Mopsuesta, under the latter of whom Nestorius himself had imbibed the principles of Theology. These doctors of the Syrian Church, held and promulgated similar dogmas to those for which Nestorius was condemned, and their influence over the Persian school predisposed the minds of its members in favour of the tenets of the deposed Patriarch. They were confirmed in their attachment to these views by an event which took place shortly after the condemnation of Nestorius.

Digitized by Google

Rabulus, Bishop of Edessa, had been at first one of the warmest supporters of the latter during the debates at Ephesus. He had seconded John of Antioch in his inimical proceedings against Cyril, but after his return a marked change took place in his views. He began to regard the Persian school with suspicious dislike, and at last broke it up entirely, and required the masters to leave the city with their disciples. Burning with resentment on account of the affront which they had received, the expelled students returned to Persia, and became noted for their zeal in propagating the opinions of Nestorius. The names of the principal men of this party were Bar Sumas, Acacius, and Maanes, who obtained, in course of time, the sees of Nisibis, Seleucia, and Persia.

The great majority of the Chaldean Christians would doubtless have maintained a neutral position, but for the restless activity and intrigues of Bar Sumas, who seems to have obtained considerable influence at the Persian court. Having gained access to Firouz, who then occupied the throne of Persia, he represented to him the policy of dividing the Oriental Christians from the Greeks. He urged, that as long as both agreed in their doctrinal views, the affections of the Chaldeans would always be in danger of

Digitized by Google

alienation from their lawful monarchs, and their allegiance might be tampered with by the Greek Emperors. He concluded by counselling the Persian monarch to aid and protect him in extending those opinions which could not fail to excite and maintain perpetual enmity between the two races.

The counsel of Bar Sumas was eagerly adopted by Firouz, Babuæus, the Metropolitan of Seleucia was put to death, and Acasius, one of the expelled students of Edessa appointed in his room. At the same time, the Emperor Zeno, who favoured the Monophysites, caused all Persian students to leave Edessa, an act which inflamed still more the anger of the Persian monarch, who commenced a furious persecution against all Christians opposed to the doctrines of Nestorius. At the head of a large band of soldiers, the infamous Bar Sumas marched over the Assyrian plains, and massacred without pity, about seven thousand persons. The body of Bar Sobedes, Bishop of Nineveh, which was among the slain, was carried off and honourably nterred by a Jew, who had lately embraced the Christian faith.

The process of Nestorianism was finally triumphant in the churches of Assyria under Babuæus, who was raised to the see of Seleucia, A.D. 496, and who first threw off the allegiance of Antioch, and assumed the title of Patriarch of the East.

Digitized by Google

Among the bishops of Western Asia, a few supported the cause, and embraced the tenets of Nestorius, but in a century after the council of Ephesus, all external traces of the heresy had disappeared from the Roman dominions in the East. This was mainly attributable to the expulsion of the Persians from Edessa, and to the great prevalence of the Monophysite doctrine in that celebrated University. Fostered by the Emperor Zeno, and Severus, Patriarch of Antioch, the disciples of Eutyches had nearly succeeded in gaining for the dogma of the one nature, a reception almost universal. The Monophysite Syrians became the most violent opponents of Nestorianism, and obliged the opposers of the council of Ephesus to confine themselves exclusively to the Persian dominions.*

The monarchs of Persia on the other hand, when they discovered that their Chaldean subjects were violently averse to the rule and the tenets of the Greek Emperors, began to treat them with greater toleration than before. The loss of the school at Edessa was compensated by the foundation of Chaldean seminaries at Nisibis and Arbela, where the doctors of the Nestorian sect propagated their opinions with great success. They began to review and to refine the terms of their creed, and to clothe its doctrines in less

* Assem, tom. iii.

Digitized by Google

objectionable language. They laboured to prove that they had not followed the sentiments of a private individual, but were maintaining in all its purity, the technical phraseology which had always been received in their church from the days of the Apostles. Their doctrine, after much discussion and difference of opinion, assumed at length the following form, which was solemnly set forth and defended by several councils assembled at Seleucia.

"In Christ there are two Substances, two Natures, two Persons, namely the Divine Person of the Word, and the human Person of Jesus. But both these two Natures and two Persons are closely united by the existence of one will, one operation, one power, one prosopon or appearance, and one aspect. The Blessed Virgin is not to be termed therefore the mother of God, but the mother of Christ."

The meaning of these dogmas will be more clearly illustrated, perhaps, by the following extract from one of their most esteemed authors, who composed an exposition of the Nicene Creed; — "We say," he writes, "that the Word was united with the [humanity] assumed, by a union of will, of adhesion†, and of person.

* Mosheim, Cent. V. Assem, tom. iii.

† The word used signifies the union, real or supposed, which is derived from the contiguity of two persons or things.

Digitized by Google

"Wherefore Christ is one, even one son, since there is an union of will. As, in like manner, two or three men differing from each other in essence and person may be united by the agreement of their several wills, for the Scripture saith, 'To the believing there was one mind and one will.' There is an union of adhesion which resembles the union of a man and his wife, who, according to the Gospel, become one flesh, as it is said, 'Wherefore a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife.' The union of person is as the union of a king and his friend, the latter of whom often holds the place of the former, and exercises rule, authority, and power. In this manner, the Eternal Son is united to the assumed human nature, and hence is made one Christ, one son, one will, by means of the contiguity of the persons, but not naturally. Wherefore Christ is termed two natures, two persons, but one son, even as in the Scriptures David and Jonathan, a man and his wife, a king and his friend, are sometimes called two prosopa.* Thus, the Eternal Son and the man Jesus Christ are one. As David and Jonathan, a man and his wife, a king and his friend have but one will in all things, so in the

* The words "Prosopa" and "Prosopon" denote the outward form and appearance which distinguishes one person from another.

Digitized by Google

Eternal Word, and in the assumed humanity, there exists also only one will."

By a careful perusal of the above, it will be seen that the Nestorians differed from other Christians in teaching that the union between the manhood and the Godhead was figurative merely, and not real or substantial. They held that the Deity dwelt in the human body of Jesus as in a temple, and hence they denied the title of Theotokos to the Virgin Mary. A careful distinction is always maintained, in their controversial writings, between God and Christ, the union between them being always described as one solely of will and affection, or adhesion, as will be seen by the examples referred to above.

All communication having been broken off between the sees of Antioch and Seleucia, the Metropolitan of the latter was regarded by all the Persian bishops as the head of their new community. The title of Patriarch of the Chaldeans seems to have been assumed by the new spiritual chief, though some of his successors termed themselves Patriarchs of the East. At the commencement of the sixth century, Cosmas Indicopleustes described their dominion as extending over Persia, India, and Arabia Felix.

About the year 530 A.D., Patricius, Archbishop of Persia, ordained priests, deacons, and even bishops for

Digitized by Google

the regions of Calliana Male (Malabar), and Sielediva (Ceylon). The Bactrians, the Huns, the Persarmeni, the Medes and Elamites, numbered, in their several countries, large and flourishing congregations, who obeyed the authority of the Chaldean Patriarch.

In Arabia, the doctrines of Nestorianism appear to have prevailed for some time prior to the birth of Mohammed, who is reported to have derived considerable information and assistance from Sergius, a Chaldean monk. It is stated, on credible authority, that Jesujabus, Patriarch of the Nestorians, went in company with Said, the chief of an Arab-Christian tribe, to visit the Prophet at Mecca, and obtained from him a written compact, whereby he promised to respect the faith and the privileges of the Chaldeans of the East. The authenticity and genuineness of this document has been much disputed, and those who impugn its veracity have considered it as the forgery of some Nestorian or Syrian monks, the latter of whom were, as is generally admitted, at one time guilty of a similar fraud. Yet, when we consider the mutual hostility which prevailed between these two sects, as well as the known favour with which the Mohammedans afterwards treated the Nestorians, the fact that such a grant emanated from the Arabian Impostor may be considered at least probable.

Digitized by Google

This document commends the Christians to the good will of the Arabs, and charges that they shall not be molested or injured in any manner. They are not to be compelled to change their customs or their laws, and the aid of a Moslem may be lawfully employed in rebuilding a ruined church. Priests and monks are not required to pay tribute. A moderate tax is placed upon both rich and poor, and it is expressly forbidden that the Christian female servant or slave who serves in the house of an Arab, should be molested in the performance of her religious duties.*

Maremes, the successor of Jesujabus, is recorded to have obtained from Ali Ben Abi Taleb a similar document, in reward for certain services which he rendered the Moslem army during the siege of Mosul, about A.D. 648. The Arabian conquerors seem to have adhered faithfully to their written promises; and the successor of Maremes, in writing to Simon, Metropolitan of Persia, commends the honour which they bestowed on the saints and servants of God, their veneration for Christianity, and even their gifts to churches and convents.

It is not improbable, indeed, that the toleration bestowed on the Christians by the Moslem invader,

* Assem. tom. iii.

Digitized by Google

proceeded from a grateful sense of the services which the former had rendered them during their campaigns in Mesopotamia and Persia. The bigotry of the Magi had alienated the affections of the Chaldeans from the Persian monarch, and they hoped, doubtless, to find themselves less exposed to persecution under those whose creed was partially adapted from their own.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VIII.

Remarks on the Ecclesiastical History of the Chaldeans.

The Arabian Caliphs of Baghdad were generally men of a very different character from the rude and ignorant fanatics who first assumed to themselves the title of Successors of the prophet. Several members of the house of Abbas were distinguished by the encouragement which they afforded to poetry and polite literature, while the arts which they cultivated seem to have rendered their political and religious sentiments more tolerant and humane. The Christians, reviled and insulted in other parts of the East, found both protection and support from the chief pontiffs of Islam. Their knowledge of medicine and of Greek learning, gained them favour from the

Digitized by Google

polished sovereigns, who amused their leisure hours by poetical compositions, which have not been considered by posterity entirely void of merit. Aristotle, Plato, and Hippocrates soon appeared in an Arabian dress, while the skill of the Nestorian physicians rendered their services of no small value to the caliphs and their nobles.

The Greek Melkites and the Syrian Jacobites seem to have possessed churches and congregations at Baghdad during the dynasty of the Abbasides, but of all Christians the Nestorians were held in the greatest esteem. They had rendered signal services to the Mohammedan cause, and it is not improbable that their known enmity to the Greeks induced the Caliphs to regard them as more firm adherents than the Melkites or Jacobites, both of whom were suspected of a secret attachment to the emperors of the East.

Nor was it merely as physicians and scholars that the Nestorians distinguished themselves at this period. They obtained occasionally the government of cities and provinces, a policy in which Abdallah, the son of Suleiman, was supported and encouraged on one occasion by the Caliph Motaded himself. Some zealous Mussulmen had accused the Satrap to his sovereign of showing more favour to Christians than was just

Digitized by Google

and right. The Caliph presented his officer with the written complaint, upon which Abdallah answered that he had, indeed appointed trustworthy Christians, Magians, and even Jews, to offices of trust, but that this circumstance rendered him no more favourable to the religion of the one than to that of the other.

The Caliph replied, "You do well to use the services of Christians when you can obtain them, and even to give them a special preference over Jews, Mohammedans, and Magi, seeing that their obedience and faith is more praiseworthy than that of either of these. For the Jews expect a future kingdom that will overthrow our power; the Mohammedans may endeavour to circumvent thee and usurp thy dignity, while the Magi have not forgotten their lost rule. Therefore, I deem it more politic that thou shouldest commit the chief posts in thy province to Christians."

The Caliph's opinion seems to have influenced, also, his successors, and we find Christian governors were frequently appointed to the provinces of Adiabene, Assyria, and Nisibis.*

The power of the Nestorian physicians and secretaries† was not only exerted in protecting the members

* Mares in Vita Abrahæ Patriarch. Thomas Margensis, tom. iii. Assemani, tom. iii.

† I have used this term as the best translation of the Arabic Katib, which signified literally a writer or scribe.

Digitized by Google

of their sect from the tyranny of the Mohammedans, but it enabled them also to control the internal affairs of their community. Their influence prevailed to a great extent in ecclesiastical matters; they nominated and deposed patriarchs, and appointed bishops to their sees. A canon contained in the Chaldean Pontifical recognizes their authority and their privileges, by intrusting the election of patriarchs to a mixed assemblage of bishops, priests, physicians, and scribes. On one occasion, we find Abraham, the son of Noah, a physician, was permitted to name whom he would as the chief of the Chaldean Church. His nominee, however, was opposed by Boch Yesus, another layman, whose influence with the Caliph Motawakkel enabled him to carry his point.

The Nestorian patriarch was recognized by the caliphs as the head of all other Christians in their dominions. Some Greek inhabitants of Baghdad sent a petition to the Patriarch of Antioch, in which they begged him to appoint a metropolitan holding the Melkite faith to the see of Seleucia. He complied with their request, and despatched an ecclesiastic, whose name was John, to assume the rank of a metropolitan, and to regulate the affairs of the Greeks. But Abraham, the head of the Nestorian church, considering this act an invasion of his

Digitized by Google

privileges, carried the case before the Wuzeer, who, being propitiated by a large bribe, determined it in his favour, and decreed that in future no Greek metropolitan or bishop should take up his residence at Baghdad, seeing that the Patriarch of the Nestorians was the only chief of the Christians recognized by law.

The Caliph, Moktadi Biamerallah, granted the Patriarch Machica a document, in which the following terms occur: "The Commander of the Faithful appointeth thee the Catholicos of the Christian Nestorians, residing in Baghdad, the city of peace, and in the other provinces and regions; he declareth thee their prelate, and the spiritual governor of all Jacobites and Greeks also, who dwell in the countries of the Mohammedans, or have come thither, and it is commanded that all obey thy orders and commands."

Yet, notwithstanding these honours and privileges, the state of the Nestorians under the caliphs was precarious and uncertain. The fickle character of a despotism like that under which they lived, often brought them under the frown of the sovereign, when individual members of their sect had been so unfortunate as to displease him. The intrigues of ambitious Patriarchs and aspiring laymen, often rent the community asunder, while under the Egyptian Caliph,

Digitized by Google

Hakim Biamerallah, a persecution was excited against the Christians, the effects of which seem to have been felt as far as Baghdad.

It seems now a fitting opportunity to notice the missions of the Nestorians, and the character of the different regions and people whither their enterprising missionaries penetrated.

Shortly after their expulsion from Edessa, a large and flourishing school was formed by the Nestorians at Nisibis, which had been recently taken by Sapor from the Romans. The captured city, it is likely, was almost entirely peopled by Chaldean inhabitants, who replaced those followers of the Greek rite that had accompanied Jovian in his retreat. From Nisibis they penetrated into the provinces of Upper and Lower Armenia, while a large number lived peaceably in Cilicia and Asia Minor, under the protection of the princes of those countries, and the Greek emperors. At a later period, we find them in Palestine, and even in Cyprus, whither they had doubtless followed the retreating Crusaders.

But their chief success seems to have been in the more eastern regions of Asia. They gained numerous proselytes at an early period in Persia, and from that kingdom they appear to have advanced into Afghanistan, India, and Tartary.

Digitized by Google

The Chaldean writers inform us that St. Thomas was the first who announced the tidings of Christianity to the inhabitants of the Malabar coast, where the Portuguese discovered large and flourishing congregations, who entitled themselves the spiritual children of this Apostle. From western India he proceeded to the Coromandel coast, which he left for the remote regions of China, and preached with great success in the city of Cambalu, which is supposed to be the modern Pekin. From Cambalu he returned to the city of Meliapore, situated near the modern town of Madras, and still known by the title of St Thomè, where he suffered Martyrdom, and in the vicinity of which he is said to have been buried. The tradition seems to have prevailed from a very early period, and the Roman and Armenian Christians of Madras still point out a small hillock, eight miles from Fort St. George, which is revered as the site of the Apostle's martyrdom.

Whatever credit may be given to the above statements, it appears certain that, at a very early period, Nestorian priests and bishops were found in the peninsula of India. The metropolitan who presided over these was consecrated in Persia, and the primate of the latter country deemed his ecclesiastical rule, in the seventh century, to be sufficiently extensive to

Digitized by Google

allow of his withdrawing himself from the obedience of the Patriarch of Baghdad. In Guzzerat and Lahore, in Candahar and Cabul, numerous bodies of Christians flourished in peace and tranquillity, whose bishops were frequently summoned to the councils held at Meliapore. In the sixteenth century the number of the Christians residing in the Malabar country was computed at nearly 30,000 families, but since the arrival of the English they seem to have greatly decreased.

In the seventeenth century, these Nestorians of India appear to have withdrawn themselves from the communion of the Patriarch of Baghdad, obtaining their bishops from the Syrian Pontiff of Mardin.

To the north-east of Persia extend the widely spread plains of Tartary, which, from the earliest ages, were inhabited by wandering tribes, who maintain, even to this day, the habits of a pastoral and nomadic race. The first remarkable notice of these warlike shepherds occurs in the thirteenth century of the Christian era. The first chieftain who possessed sufficient influence to cement together the various conflicting hordes, was Chengis, or Gengis Khan. Before his time, the Tartars lived in subjection to the monarchs of Cathay, or China, and are spoken of by Bar Hebræus as a race whose savage

Digitized by Google

and uncivilized habits provoked the disgust of their contemporaries. Their clothing was composed of the skins of wolves and of dogs, and they fed greedily on the carrion of dead animals. Their leader was distinguished by an iron stirrup borne before him, which served as a standard in their numerous predatory expeditions.

The religion of this wild people seems to have resembled the rude and baseless superstitions of the early Turcomans. They professed to believe in a God, but they paid him neither honour nor worship, while they received with avidity the predictions and advice of certain Kami, or soothsayers, whose credit was, however, destroyed by the contrivance of Gengis Khan. Having understood that the Chinese possessed magnificent idols, and priests of uncommon wisdom, he sent an embassy to request that some of the latter might be sent him, promising to treat them with great honour. When they arrived, he ordered the Kami to hold a public disputation with the new comers on the subject of religion, but the ignorant soothsayers were soon silenced by their more able antagonists, who reinforced their arguments by reading copious extracts from a ritual which they entitled Num. With the illiterate, the affectation of learning is frequently sufficient to convince or to

Digitized by Google

persuade, and the Kami retreated from the arena pursued by the sneers and ridicule of their late admirers. In this manner the doctrines of Budh appear, for the first time, to have been introduced among the Tartars.

The first great exploit of Gengis was his successful war with Unch Khan, a Tartar prince, who is supposed to be the same as the person commonly known by the appellation of Prester, or Presbyter John. From the epistle addressed by the latter to the Emperor of Constantinople, there seems reason to believe that many Tartar chiefs had embraced the Christian faith, and gave protection and encouragement to the labours of the Nestorian missionaries. Yet the polygamy of Prester John, and his intolerable pride, appear contradictory to any form of Christianity, and not a few learned men have considered the whole epistle an ingenious fraud.

Gengis Khan, having assembled around him a large number of vassals, resolved to demand in marriage the daughter of Unch Khan. The latter received the envoy with indignant pride, and answered that he could better endure the death of his daughter than see her united to a slave. Enraged at this uncourteous message, Gengis assembled his

Digitized by Google

forces, and a battle ensued, in which Unch Khan was defeated and slain.

The indifference of the princes of the house of Gengis to their own superstitions seems to have induced them to lend a ready ear to the teaching of the Nestorians. John of Monte Corvino, who visited Tartary in the fourteenth century, mentions the chief of a country called Cambaliech, who was converted by him from the Nestorian errors, to which his brothers and family continued devotedly attached. A Nestorian monk of the name of Rabban was the confessor and privy councillor of the daughter of Unch Khan after her marriage to Gengis. The character of this person, however, does not appear to have reflected much credit upon his religion. A European traveller describes him as deceiving the Tartars by pretended gifts of divination, and as practising the petty arts of a merchant and an usurer.

An Armenian noble, in the thirteenth century, gives the following curious account of the Christians in the Tartar dominions. "Five years after that the Tartars raised to the throne the younger Khan, they could scarcely be gathered together in one place, for some of them were in India, others in the land

Digitized by Google

of Katha, in Russia, in the land of Chasqur, and in Tangarth. This last is the country from which the three kings came to Bethlehem to adore Christ, and the men of that land are also Christians. I was, on one occasion, in several of their churches, where I saw pictures of Jesus Christ, and of the three kings, one offering gold, another frankincense, and a third myrrh. The inhabitants received the Christian faith from these three kings, and by them the Cham and his nobles have been made Christians. They have churches near his gates, in which they ring bells and beat boards * to show that those who are going in to the Khan ought first to enter the church and salute the Lord Jesus. We found many Christians scattered over the regions of the East, and many large, handsome, and spacious churches which had been destroyed by the Tartars. The Khan treated the followers of Christ with great honour and respect."

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Nestorian metropolitans were despatched to Tartary, and it is not improbable that some vestiges of Christianity may yet be lingering in the cities of that vast and unexplored region. Still, we may doubt, upon the whole, whether the Nestorian missions effected any

* Few of the Eastern churches are allowed to use bells. They supply their places by beating a board.

Digitized by Google

real and permanent good. The versatile character of the Tartars often induced them to patronize the Nestorian missionaries, and even to hold out hopes of conversion, which were greedily seized upon, and industriously circulated. Yet, impartial travellers have recorded that the missionaries not unfrequently disgraced their sacred character by pandering to the vices and superstitions of the ignorant people they came to reclaim. They boasted of their skill in divination, and asked a blessing on the vast goblets, whose intoxicating contents the wine-loving barbarians drained at a single draught. Polygamy seems to have been permitted to the real or imaginary converts, as attested by the Epistle of Prester John; nor does the Christian faith appear to have made any solid impression on the minds of the Tartars.

The kingdom of Cathay seems to have comprised the more northern regions of the Chinese Empire, whose present capital is Pekin, the Cambalu of the older travellers. At the close of the seventh century it contained a large number of Christian inhabitants, who were under the spiritual guidance of Nestorian teachers. In the seventeenth century a monument was discovered near the city of Segan-fu, which contained many curious particulars with regard to the early introduction of Christianity into China. The

Digitized by Google

stone in question bore the figure of the Cross engraved at the top, beneath which were inscriptions in Chinese and Syriac. The date of its erection is given as A.D. 781, and it records the names of those who had preached Christianity in China from the year 636.

The first section of the inscription contains a disquisition on the Trinity in Unity. It represents God as having created all things from nothing, and as forming man endowed with original righteousness, to whose charge and dominion all human things have been subjected. It is worthy of remark that in this portion of the inscription, the Syriac word Oloho is used in Chinese characters to express the Supreme Being.

Section 2 relates to the fall of Adam, and the various errors of his descendants, who, adoring the creature in the place of the Creator, are said to have been divided into sixty-five sects.

Section 3 treats of the incarnation, nativity, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ; it notices, also, the books of the Old and New Testaments, the nature of baptism, the veneration due to the Cross, and the necessity of worshipping towards the East.

Section 4 contains remarks on the preaching of the Apostles on the sacred vestments used by Christians,

Digitized by Google

on their civil habits and manners. It mentions the beard worn by ecclesiastics, the tonsure, fasting, and the seven daily hours of prayer.

Section 5 records the preaching the Christian religion in the regions of China by Olopuen, who is described as a native of Ta Sin, or Syria. He enters China in the reign of Tai Sum, and his religion receives the royal approval; the Emperor causes a church to be built, and assigns Olopuen twenty-one attendants. The Olopuen of the inscription is supposed to be the Nestorian Missionary Jaballaha.

Section 6. A description of Ta Sin, or Syria.

Section 7. A relation of the progress of Christianity during the reign of Cao-Sum. The Emperor being by no means degenerate from the virtues of his father, intends to continue the designs of the latter; he charges that churches should be erected in all the provinces, and honours Olopuen with the title of Bishop of the Great Law which governs the kingdom of China. The law of God is spoken of as promulgated through the ten provinces, and the multitude of churches and of congregations is alluded to.

Section 8, treats of the persecution of the Christians from A. D. 699, to A. D. 713, by the Bonzes in the province of Honan.

Digitized by Google

In section 9, and the twelve following, we find a history of the progress, persecutions, and successes of Christianity from A.D. 719, to A.D. 782.

That this tablet contains a true history of the efforts of the Nestorian Missionaries during the above mentioned periods, seems beyond the possibility of doubt. It is probable that Christianity prevailed in the northern parts of China, until the subjugation of the Chinese dynasties by Gengis Khan, and that Unch Khan or Prester John, was the last of these native Princes. Whether, however, the Chinese sovereigns embraced the Gospel, or merely encouraged and protected its professors, may be regarded as an unsettled point. That many conversions were made is certain, but the Missionaries seem to have been too little desirous of maintaining the purity of religion uncorrupted. They have been accused of allowing polygamy to the converts of rank, of overlooking many of their excesses, and of persecuting the Latin Missionaries who penetrated into China at the commencement of the fourteenth century.

Nor does it seem easy to account for the fact of the sudden disappearance of Christianity in China, except we admit, as candour compels us, that its first promulgation was accompanied by many defects, and even positive errors, on the part of those who first announced

Digitized by Google

it to the Chinese. Yet to mar that which should be perfect, by faults proceeding from human imperfection is a law of human action, whose operation is witnessed too frequently to excite in a reasonable mind either indignation or surprise. The frailty of our common nature renders it more easy to point out the defects of others, than to recognise or amend our own, and it is always less difficult to censure than to imitate, even in its imperfection, a noble and virtuous undertaking.

The expulsion of the Tartar Emperors in the fourteenth century, and the restoration of the dynasty of the Mim family seem to have caused the ruin of Christianity in China. In A.D. 1517, the Portuguese merchants at Canton could discover no person who professed himself a Christian, though they often met with crosses and other relics of the Nestorian and Latin Missionaries. In fact, the very name of our faith seemed to have been abolished, and it was only the discovery of the monument before alluded to, that could induce the Europeans to believe that there had ever been Christians in China.

At the commencement of the seventeenth century, a Jew of Cai-fum-fu informed the Jesuit Missionary Ricci, that, sixty years before, a large number of Christians occupied the northern provinces of China, who

Digitized by Google

were called in the language of the country, the adorers of the Cross. By the ill offices of the Mohammedans, the suspicions of the government were excited against them, and a severe persecution commenced, which led many to embrace Judaism and the creed of Islam. Their churches were either destroyed or turned into private houses, and they were induced from fear of the magistrates to conceal their origin and former faith. Ricci afterwards travelled to the region indicated by the Jew, but he could obtain no satisfaction from his enquiries or researches, and this report, which, however, seems to bear the marks of probability on its surface, is the last tidings that have been obtained of the once extensive and flourishing Chinese Nestorian Church.

The position of the Nestorians of Assyria under the Tartar successors of the Caliphs appears to have been as favourable as they could desire. The mother of Hulaku Khan was well disposed towards the Christians, who even considered her a second Helena. In 1248, messengers came from Kyokay Khan to St. Louis, to treat about an alliance against the Saracens. In his letters the Khan alludes to himself as a Christian, and professes that he regards with equal favour the Armenians, the Jacobites, and the Nestorians. In 1258, A.D. the Tartars captured Baghdad, and des-

Digitized by Google

troyed the power of the Caliphs. One of the wives of their leader Hulaku is said to have been a Christian, and by her influence the Saracen Mosques were shut up, or converted into churches, while the Mohammedans suffered some persecution, and were afraid to appear in public.

After the death of Hulaku, his son and successor, Huolon entered into alliances with the Christian monarchs of Georgia and Armenia, and planned, in conjunction with them, an expedition to the Holy land, which design, however, was frustrated by his death. During the following reign, a tumult was excited at Baghdad by the report that the Nestorian Patriarch had caused a renegado from Christianity to Mohammedanism to be drowned in the Tigris. He denied the accusation strenuously, but was obliged to fly to Arbela, in order to escape the violence of the populace. His successor was Jaballaha, a man of exemplary piety, who sent a confession of his faith to the reigning Pontiff, Nicholas IV.

Under Bayid, the grandson of Hulaku, the Nestorians received much favour and assistance. The monarch was wise, chaste, and temperate, and it was even said that he had secretly embraced the Christian faith. His favour to the Nestorians awakened the jealousy of the Mohammedans, who intrigued against

Digitized by Google

him secretly with a Tartar chief named Casan or Kazan. The latter affecting great zeal for the Koran, he was joined by a large number of the Moslems, by the aid of whom he put Bayid to death, and mounted his throne. He did not however keep the promises which he had made to his allies, but soon began to favour the Christians, though he permitted, at first, a severe persecution against them.

The successor of Casan had been educated by his mother in the Christian faith, and had even received the sacrament of Baptism, but after his accession he apostatized to the Mohammedan tenets, although he does not appear to have molested his Christian subjects.

In the sixteenth century, Tamerlane overran Chaldea, Assyria, and Mesopotamia, captured the city of Baghdad, and treated the Christians with savage cruelty. On one occasion, however, the heart of a conqueror was softened by an act of heroic self-devotion. The Tartars had besieged the fortress of Ardua, and menaced unpitying slaughter to its defenders. Fearful of the result of the siege, an aged bishop, by name Behnam, issued forth alone, and unarmed, to entreat the mercy of the besiegers. Throwing himself at the feet of their general, he implored them to accept his life as a ransom for the devoted garrison. The son of Tamerlane was moved, he bestowed upon

Digitized by Google

the aged suppliant a handkerchief, as a token of protection, and withdrew his forces from the fortress to the attack of some less favoured city.

Nothing of importance occurs in the history of the Nestorians until the sixteenth century, when a formidable schism broke out amongst them. About a hundred years before, a Patriarch, whose name was Simon or Shimon, had introduced a custom whereby the Patriarchal dignity was to remain in his family as an hereditary honour This must have occurred shortly after the removal of the Patriarchate from Baghdad to Mosul, during the troubles occasioned by the invasion of Tamerlane. At that time the Nestorians were in a most depressed condition, and such an arrangement was doubtless deemed necessary in order to secure and regulate the succession. For some years this custom continued without opposition, but in 1551, the Patriarchal line was represented by a single individual, entitled Simeon Bar Mama, whose haughtiness and love of innovation had aroused against him a great number of the Nestorian clergy.

The bishops of Amida, Nisibis, Mardin, Arbela, and other places, assembled at Mosul in council, overlooked the pretensions of Bar Mama, and elected John Sulaka or Siud, a monk of Rabban Hormuzd, to fill the Patriarchal throne. A still larger faction seems

Digitized by Google

to have supported the cause of Bar Mama, who appears to have prevailed over his rival, maintaining his claim to the Patriarchate successfully. Sulaka then repaired to Rome, ostensibly to seek for consecration, but really to enlist the Pope's influence in his favour. He was well received, and obtained the object of his wishes by a specious and acceptable confession of faith, whereupon, returning to the East, he fixed the seat of the Patriarchate at Amida, which has since continued the head quarters of the Romish Chaldeans. It is asserted, though, perhaps, not on the most trustworthy authority, that soon after his return, Bar Mama obtained by his influence with the Turks, the destruction of his rival.

After this event the Nestorian Church seems to have been divided into three sections, at the head of which appear the Patriarchs of Amida, Mosul, and Gelu. Of these, the former had from the commencement considered themselves the faithful vassals of Rome, and were regarded as the chiefs of the Papal Chaldeans. In A.D. 1580, the Metropolitan of Gelu revolted from the jurisdiction of Elias of Mosul, and got himself appointed Patriarch of the Kurdish and Persian Chaldeans at Rome. His successors, however, seem afterwards to have thrown off the Papal au-

Digitized by Google

thority, and to have maintained their independence among the mountains of Kurdistan.

In A.D. 1622, the Missionaries of the Carmelite and Capucin orders appeared in Assyria, and commenced vigorously their operations among the Nestorians. Many were induced to yield a nominal and hollow obedience, and in 1629, the Patriarch, Elias of Mosul, sent a profession of submission to the Pope, which doubtless exercised some influence over those who adhered still to the doctrines of Nestorius.

At the period of our visit, the term Nestorian might have been confined to the mountaineers of Kurdistan, and the inhabitants of the Persian city of Ouromiah. They still resist with great firmness the intrusion of any Roman Missionary, but their numbers are rapidly decreasing, and soon the descendants of those whose spiritual jurisdiction extended over some of the most populous and flourishing countries of Asia, will probably be reduced to a small and insignificant sect, whose numbers may be computed by individuals.

The surviving Nestorians still hold in words the same creed which was promulgated by Bar Sumas and his followers, though it may be doubted, whether they enter into, or comprehend its subtilties. But the whole of both clergy and laity are so deeply immersed

Digitized by Google

in ignorance, that they are scarcely capable of defending or explaining their doctrines. The American Independent Missionaries have established schools among them at Ouromiah, which are I believe well attended.

In concluding these remarks, I cannot but hope that some measures may be taken by the English government to procure the restoration of this poor and persecuted race to the mountain homes from which they were so barbarously driven. Whatever their theological errors may be, and I have endeavoured neither to extenuate nor defend them, the people themselves are deeply deserving of our sympathy and pity. Suffering for the sake of Christianity, they have a right to claim the support of a Christian nation, and of a Church, that, with all her failings, has never shown herself willing to trample on, or slight the destitute and oppressed.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IX.

The Magician. The Mollah. Kas Botros' Tale. Bishop Matti. General Observations.

As I was sitting one evening in my house at Mosul, endeavouring to extract some warmth from the wood fire which blazed before me, the servant announced an individual of singular appearance, who, he said, wished to have some conversation with me. I bade my new visitor be seated, and handed him a pipe, while, during the customary salutations, I took a short survey of his figure and habiliments. He was a man of middle age, with a wild, haggard countenance, and dull, glassy eyes, which, when seated, he fixed intently on one corner of the ceiling, and never took them off until his departure. I was wondering what he could have to say to me, but, after a short

Digitized by Google

pause, he enquired abruptly, "Do you not know me? I am a friend of the Djin" (Genii).

I now recollected that I had seen him exhibit some conjuring tricks at one of the houses in Mosul, and, after acknowledging the acquaintance, I asked what his business might be. He seemed scarcely to notice my question, but after a little while, he said, "Should you like to see the Djin?"

"What do they resemble, O man," I enquired. "Are they very frightful?"

"On my head, no," he answered. "They are very handsome and comely, and there are those among them who are like the houries, which our Prophet, may he enjoy happiness, promised to the true believers in Paradise. Doubtless you wonder that I should ask you if you would see them, but you will not be surprised when you hear the reason. Know, then, that the Djin do not dress as the Easterns do; they are not habited in turbans, zeboons, and flowing abbas, but they appear in short coats of cloth, in pantour,* and in hats."

"Hats do you say?" I exclaimed.

"Upon my head, hats," he replied; "and, from the similarity of dress, I presumed there might be some connexion between them and the Ingleez, the more

* Pantaloons.

Digitized by Google

particularly as your people are always digging for treasures, which every child knows are under the special guardianship of the Djin. Thinking, therefore, that you might like to see them, I have brought a form of incantation, which, if you like, I will sell you for a few piastres."

I took the paper he offered me, and found it was composed of a number of Arabic words, which to me were perfectly unintelligible, written round a kind of circle divided into four compartments, each of which was inscribed with the name of an angel.

"How is this to be used?" I enquired.

"You must draw a circle on the floor at midnight," he said, "with the blood of a black cock. You must then place within it four vessels of incense towards the four corners of the earth. When these rites have been duly performed, light the incense, and begin to read from the paper. The Genii will then appear on every side of you, and, it may be, will tempt you to step out of the circle, which you must on no account do, or you will be torn in pieces by them. As long as you remain within, ask any questions you choose, and they must answer. Nay, should you command them to show you the palaces of Nimroud, the accursed, they are bound to obey."

Feeling, however, in nowise inclined to figure in a

Digitized by Google

Der Freyschutz scene of this kind, I returned him his paper, and addressed him on the folly and wickedness of his pretensions. He still persisted, however, that he was in league with the Djin, nor could he see any impropriety in practising an art which had always been tolerated by El Islam. Finding at last that I declined purchasing his wares, he took his departure. What struck me as most singular in this interview, was his assertion that the Genii resembled in their appearance the natives of Europe. The same thing, however, was told me by a heathen in India respecting the evil spirits who were supposed to haunt a wood in the neighbourhood of his village. They appeared, he said, in English dresses, used English oaths, and were carried about in palanquins. This differs greatly from our common notions of the supernatural world, according to which we are accustomed to depict immortal forms as resembling Orientals, and clothed in all the flowing drapery of the East.

The next day I received a visitor of a very different description. He was a Mollah, from a neighbouring mosque, who had often obtained from us small pamphlets in Arabic on moral subjects. The contents of these books he was wont to transfer to his Friday sermon, omitting carefully, of course, any allusions to

Digitized by Google

Christianity which they might contain. The Mollah had great hopes of the English, because he found that they did not venerate images, and he seemed not to despair of effecting my conversion. We, therefore, entered sometimes into long arguments on the truth of Islam, but generally ended where we began. My antagonist was, however, more mild and temperate than many of his brethren; he professed to repudiate persecution, and asserted that the sensual descriptions of Paradise contained in the Koran were to be understood figuratively, and by no means according to the letter. He showed some logical skill in defending the Mohammedan view of the Unity, but failed in making out the authenticity and genuineness of the Koran.

After his departure, my servant, Yusef, whom I had taken lately in the place of Toma, began to abuse the Mollah. "Do not trust his fine words and his fair professions, O my master," said he. "This Mollah, like the rest, is a wolf with the skin of a sheep. Have I not heard him rail against Christians, and swear that we ought to be exterminated? You hear him now, he is mild and gentle, but stand behind him when he is with the Cadi and Mufti, and verily you will have a different tone. We Christians know these dogs of old. When Franks are before them, all is smiles and civility, the poor Christian is then their

Digitized by Google

brother and their friend, but when the stranger is gone, it is nothing but kicks, and cuffs, and out of my way, you Nazarene dog. Do I not know by experience these unclean Kafirs?"

My friend Kas Botros has already been mentioned in these pages as a good relator of stories, an accomplishment which drew around him every evening a large and attentive circle of auditors. Frequently, when I have shared the hospitality of his roof, I have heard a grave discussion wound up by a pertinent anecdote or an amusing tale. On one occasion, he had been remarking the importance of choosing fit persons to perform difficult commissions, and ended his discourse by the usual question, "Shall I tell you a tale?" to which, having assented, he began,

"There was once in Baghdad a Sultan who was so great a patron of ingenuity, that he readily forgave all inconveniences which it might occasion him. His doors were never closed against the ready-witted or the eccentric, and, provided their sayings and doings entertained him, he was by no means niggardly in rewarding them. The clumsy jester, however, or the witless narrator generally suffered in proportion to their presumption, for the royal critic contented himself not with mere satire or censure, but made their soles sore with the bastinado. Thus, while success

Digitized by Google

elevated the fortunate to the seventh heaven, those who failed were thrust down to Gehennam, and from the royal judgment there was no appeal. Boys ran after the unfortunates in the streets, and shouted 'there go the disappointed buffoons.'

"In the same city lived a fisherman named Abd el Aziz, whose poverty-stricken habitation was never visited by prosperity. Day after day he toiled to procure for himself a bare subsistence, and though he succeeded in warding off starvation, he never earned enough to repel the necessity for labour. This state of things grieved Abd el Aziz, who was by no means partial to work.

"One day, as he was returning mournfully from the Tigris with empty nets, he espied a man, habited in rich robes, riding a gaily caparisoned steed. A large multitude followed him with acclamations, and the curiosity of the fisherman being excited, he asked who it was. A passer-by informed him that the fortunate horseman had just furnished a most witty answer to one of the Sultan's very difficult riddles, and had obtained all this honour in consequence. The unfortunate fisherman sighed as he thought of the difference between the circumstances of the answerer and his own, and he strode moodily home to his wife, Aisha, who expected to see him return with a net full

Digitized by Google

of fish. Her disappointed looks may well be conceived when she saw the empty nets, and being, like most females of her class, somewhat of a shrew, she did not spare her husband, but poured forth with great volubility an angry harangue, the terms of which might somewhat astonish those of you Franks who represent the women of the East as the meek, gentle, and unresisting slaves of man.

"The poor fisherman listened in silence to the reproaches which were so liberally showered upon him, for he knew that remonstrance would only increase wrath. He sat for some time without making any reply, but at last, starting up with the air of one who has formed a desperate resolution, said, 'I will go to the presence of the Sultan, and try what fortune will befall me there.'

"'Are you mad!' enquired his wife; 'shall a man who has not wit enough to catch fish, hope to succeed in an undertaking, wherein so many wiser heads have failed? Are you our Lord Suleiman, O man, that you should aspire to answer the riddles of the Sultan? Truly you will return with sore soles and a broken heart, if you thus presume.'

"'Woman,' said the fisherman, 'your clamours would deprive even Lokman of sense. Happen what

Digitized by Google

may, I can scarcely encounter severer strokes than those your tongue gives me. Speak, no more, therefore, but let me go my way in peace. If it is written that I die, it is useless to attempt avoiding the stroke of fate.'

"Aisha repented of her ill-humour, and gave vent to a flood of tears. Much as she scolded her husband occasionally, she really loved him at the bottom, and when she saw him going forth in moody silence, she could not conceal her apprehension that something evil would happen. The fisherman, however, took no notice of her entreaties and tears. He walked briskly along, and soon arrived at the gate of the mosque, where the people of his district assembled for the Friday prayers. A poor, ragged devotee, with a long, grey beard, was seated near the gate, rocking his body to and fro, and reciting in a nasal chant, the words of the Koran which enjoin the sacred duty of almsgiving. Abd el Aziz felt in the pocket of his gown, and with some difficulty discovered a para.

"'I may be going to my death,' thought he, 'and an act of charity will render my passage more easy over the bridge that leadeth to Paradise.' He gave the money to the devotee, and requested the benefit of his prayers.

Digitized by Google

"'May Allah and the Prophet help your enterprise, my son, whatever it may be,' said the old man, as he received the gift.

"The fisherman felt his spirits grow lighter as he moved on, and for the first time a ray of hope shot across his mind. Arrived at the gate of the palace, he desired to be admitted into the presence of the king.

"'Look to your head and your heels, my friend,' said the porter, 'those who please not our lord seldom come off with both scatheless.'

"He admitted him, however, and in a few minutes the fisherman stood before the Sultan, who was sitting down to dinner with his Wuzeer, his favourite Sultana, and his two sons. When his majesty understood the name and errand of his guest, he pointed to a roast fowl, which had just been brought in, and bade him make a proper division of the several parts to each member of the company. A large knife was then placed into the hands of Abd el Aziz, with which he cut off the head, the breast, the wings, and the legs of the bird. Then, kneeling respectfully to the Sultan, he presented him gravely with the head, saying, 'Let the head go to him who is, under Allah, head over all.' Taking the breast, he offered it to the Sultana, and said, 'The breast to her who is the

Digitized by Google

breast of the king.' Giving the wings to the minister, he said, 'Let the wings go to him who supports the Sultan, and by whose wise counsels the monarch directs his course.' The legs he presented to the king's sons, with the remark, 'The legs of a king are a brave, healthy, and affectionate offspring.'

"'But there remains yet the body of the fowl, O Abd el Aziz,' observed the Sultan, 'to whom shall that be given?'

"'To myself, O king,' was the reply, 'for are not the subjects of a monarch those who nourish him, his sons, and his ministers; are we not, also, the back that always bears burdens?'

"'You have accomplished your task well, and have deserved my approbation,' said the Sultan. 'Henceforth your face is white before me. Slaves, escort Abd el Aziz to his house, give him a horse, a dress of honour, and fifty pieces of gold.'

"The king's orders were instantly obeyed, and Aisha could scarcely credit the evidence of her senses, when she saw her husband riding along like an Emir, with a splendid robe, and attended by attendants richly dressed. The gratification was still further increased when he showed her the money, which he had received from the Sultan.

"Abd el Aziz went to his rest that evening a happy

Digitized by Google

man, but as prosperity had not made him idle, he departed, as usual, the next morning to his customary occupation. Aisha, however, was soon beset by a numerous crowd of her female acquaintances, who were speedily put in possession of everything that had occurred. Among them was a sour, discontented woman, whose name was Fatima, and whose husband exercised the calling of a cobbler near the house of the fisherman. This person returned home in an ill humour, and began to inveigh bitterly against the stupidity of her helpmate.

"'Is it well, O father of sloth,' said she, 'that you sit here from day to day mending old papouches, while your neighbour finds gold in the streets? Have you no brains, O man, that you cannot invent smart replies, or is your tongue cut out, that you cannot utter them? Upon my head, you have no more ingenuity than the donkey of an Arab.'

"Now the cobbler had no small opinion of his own abilities, and he was by no means pleased with these reproaches of his wife. However, he determined first to discover the cause of her anger, which he soon found out was the unexpected prosperity of Abd el Aziz. The discovery excited his envy and indignation also, for the honest fisherman had always been an object of contempt to him. He bade his wife be

Digitized by Google

silent, and assured her that he would at once go to the palace, and doubted not that he should return with a present double in value to that which his neighbour had obtained. He immediately left his work, and went in search of Abd el Aziz, from whom he obtained an account of his interview with the Sultan. Thinking himself now fully prepared for the task which he had undertaken, the cobbler lost no time in presenting himself before the Sultan.

"After saluting the monarch, in the usual way, he explained that hearing of his neighbour's good fortune, he had ventured to solicit that he might be accorded a similar trial of his abilities. The Sultan replied that he accepted the proposal, and commanded a fowl to be brought, which he bade the cobbler show his skill in dividing. Now the latter was determined to pay the Sultan a greater compliment than his neighbour had done, so he said, 'O king, take thou the whole, for no one else is worthy of sharing with thee.'

"But the Sultan replied, with a frown, 'Shall then my wife, my sons, and my minister go without anything?'

"'Surely, O my lord,' said t e cobbler, 'for whose dogs are they that they should be partakers in the portion of him who is as the shadow of Allah upon earth.'

Digitized by Google

"Then the Sultan grew wrath, and said, 'O Father of Bears, from what Arab or Kurd didst thou learn these manners, or from whence hast thou derived the impudence to suppose that I resemble thee in thy ill-breeding? Am I a wild beast, that I should feed alone, like a lion in his den, or like the tiger, who drinketh in his solitude the blood of the traveller? But I will give thee some lessons in politeness, which will enlighten thy stupidity, and that thou mayest remember them, behold, thou shalt eat fifty sticks.'

"The Sultan then, with his own hand, divided the bird among those who sat near him, reserving none for himself, while the cobbler received the fifty blows as his share of the repast, and limped home, amid the sneers and ridicule of the people. Thus we see that success in a matter depends upon the management of him who undertakes it."

When I returned home, I found that Bishop Matti, the Syrian Jacobite whom we met at the monastery of Zaphran, had arrived on a special mission from the Patriarch, and was expected to celebrate a special service at the principal Syrian church. My friend B—— and myself were invited to attend, and were accommodated with seats within the large recess, which is termed the holy of holies, and which was separated by a large curtain from the nave of the church. At

Digitized by Google

first this curtain was drawn up, and some preliminary ceremonies commenced.

The bishop was seated in an arm-chair, holding a cross in his hand, while four stout Syrian deacons lifted him on their shoulders, and paraded him round the church. The procession, however, was anything but dignified, as the crowd was very great, and every one endeavoured to get near the chair. The poor bishop was borne to and fro by his supporters, evidently in great peril of falling out of his seat, while the choir sang, or rather shouted, a hymn, and accompanied their voices with the clashing of several pairs of cymbals, which are the only species of instrumental music tolerated in the Syrian Church. When the procession was over, the bishop mounted the altar, the curtain was let down, and the Liturgy proceeded more quietly, though the mode in which the responses were made would rather have scandalized an English audience. Yet I saw a great many among the worshippers whose devotion seemed evidently heartfelt and sincere, and doubtless, could the Syrians have been present at one of our churches, they would have been equally astonished to find, that a people who profess to entertain so much more pure and untainted religious feeling than all other nations, invariably sit or loll when they are offering up their prayers.

Digitized by Google

Most persons form a most extravagant estimate of the cleanliness of Orientals in general, because they have heard or read that the East is the land of the bath; and yet nothing can be more filthy than the habits of the great mass of the people. Those who hear of their visits to the bath, should be told also, that they rarely wash themselves at any other time than the hours of prayer, when a little water is poured over the hands and arms, and a wet thumb inserted in the orifice of each ear. Among the middle classes, few take the bath oftener than once a month, and, with the exception of the ritual purifications I have alluded to, which amount to very little, this may be considered the only real cleansing which most Orientals undergo. The visit to the bath is therefore made a matter of some importance, and the day on which it occurs is marked out as a holiday. When the cleansing has taken place, the Eastern wraps himself luxuriously in clean towels, and discusses the news of the neighbourhood over pipes and coffee.

At one o'clock in the day, the males take their departure, and the women use the building till sunset. The bath supplies the same source of recreation to an eastern lady, that balls and parties do to their European sisters. Here each Khatoun * meets her female

* Madam, mistress, or lady.

Digitized by Google

friends, discusses scandal and fashions, and deplores the jealousy or inconstancy of her husband. Sometimes curiosity leads a European lady to the bath, which she has no sooner entered, than a loquacious and inquisitive crowd surrounds her. All flock to examine the dress and the appearance of the stranger, and it is well if she is enabled to escape uninjured in temper or equanimity, from their searching scrutiny.

At home the eastern woman is a very child in her language, thoughts, and habits. European ladies have told me of their interrupting the mistress of a Turkish mansion in the agreeable pastime of throwing pillows at her attendants, while sometimes she has been discovered demolishing whole platefuls of sweetmeats. The rank of the husband never relieves the wife from the necessity of superintending the culinary preparations of the household. Even the spouse of a Pasha usually cooks her husband's dinner, of which, however, she does not partake.

We often form exaggerated notions of the unhappiness of Turkish women; yet we must remember that what would be considered here a degradation would there be looked upon as a necessary part of female modesty. An Oriental female would deem herself lowered in the opinion of others, and in her own, if she went unveiled, or sat down at the same table with men.

Digitized by Google

The customs, therefore, which impose these restrictions upon her, are regarded by her as deductions from the natural rules of right conduct, and are, therefore, not felt as degrading, or even as tyrannical. Were the Oriental female solicited to go about as European ladies do, she would reject the suggestion as a most grievous insult.

One peculiarity in the social parties of the East is the absence of all females. Among the Christians, women sometimes sit down with their husbands and receive their guests, if those guests are Europeans, but this is rarely, if ever done, when the persons invited are Orientals. It is considered also indecent for people of different sexes to be seen together in public, although the closest ties of relationship may exist between them. I shall never forget the unqualified stare of astonishment with which an eastern lady regarded me, when I informed her that in England husbands walked abroad in company with their wives.

An Oriental friend having entertained the idea of marrying an European, applied to me for information respecting the probable wants and requirements of his future bride in prospectu. His countenance lengthened as I enlarged upon the necessity of allowing his wife to mix in society where males were admitted, and of tolerating her going abroad without

Digitized by Google

a veil. After a few moments thought, however, he said,—

"All this I suppose is right, according to the customs of the Franks, and, as I must not expect her to change the habits in which she has been educated, I suppose I must consent to her following manners to which I own my eastern mind is repugnant. But is there any thing else?"

"Yes," I replied, "you must give her your arm, when she has a mind to walk abroad."

"That," he replied, "I will not and cannot do. But is it absolutely necessary?"

"It is," I answered.

"Then the marriage is at an end," observed he, decidedly, "for were she a Houri from Paradise, I would never have her on those terms."

The early age at which easterns generally marry, tends to prevent the occurrence of much evil, and acts as a restraint to vicious habits. But a young couple do not, as with us, immediately commence housekeeping on their own account. The newly wedded pair reside with the father and mother of the husband, and continue in their house sometimes for years. I know of no sight more interesting than that of an aged Oriental, with his long grey beard and venerable aspect, presiding over a whole circle of married sons. It

Digitized by Google

has often brought vividly before me the Patriarchs of Holy Writ.

It is a custom in Assyria to call the father by the name of his eldest son. Thus supposing the appellation of the latter to be Mohammed, the father would be termed Abou Mohammed, the father of Mohammed; and this compound title is often substituted for his proper name. On one occasion, an old gentleman entitled Ismail, who was much respected by his neighbours, was so unfortunate as to have no son, from whom to derive an honorific appellation. What was to be done? All the neighbours agreed it would be a great shame that so respectable and worthy a man should be called all his life plain Ismail. A Mollah was called into consultation, and it was determined, by a species of legal fiction, to denominate him Abou Ahmed, the father of Ahmed. He had been known by this name for a year or two, when he married again, and a son was born, to whom in acknowledgment of the kindness of his neighbours, he gave the name of Ahmed.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER X.

Remarks on the Syrian Jacobites.

The Syrian Jacobites have been alluded to so often in the course of these pages, that it seems proper to insert a few remarks on their history, and peculiar opinions, the more especially as they constitute a considerable portion of the eastern Christians. Various derivations have been given of the name Jacobite, by which they are generally known. Some writers of this sect have affected to deduce it from the appellation of the Patriarch Jacob, or from that of St. James or Jacobos, the brother of our Lord. The most probable derivation, however, seems to be founded on the supposition, that it was an appellative fastened on the followers of Jacobus Baradæus by the Orthodox,

Digitized by Google

about a century and a half after the council of Chalcedon.

The latter Synod was held, A.D. 451, to condemn the opinions of Eutyches, an Abbot of Constantinople, who, in his eager detestation of the doctrines of Nestorius, had fallen into the opposite extreme, and pronounced that there was but one nature in Christ. The term itself was comparatively harmless, as it seems to have been used by the Egyptian and Syrian doctors before his time, but, from the language of Eutyches, it appeared that he affixed to it a peculiar sense of his own, and considered the humanity of the Saviour as swallowed up in His divinity. The condemnation of these opinions by the council gave rise to a new sect, who were sometimes called Monophysites, or holders of the docrine of the one nature, and sometimes Eutychians, from the name of their founder. Great numbers of the easterns distinguished themselves by their opposition to the decrees of Chalcedon, and, in the course of twenty years, the new opinions had pervaded Armenia, Pontus, Mesopotamia, Syria, and Egypt.

Towards the close of the fifth century, an attempt was made by the Emperor Zeno to heal the divisions of the Church by the publication of the Henoticon or act of union, whereby the existence of the council of

Digitized by Google

Chalcedon was virtually ignored. Of the five great Patriarchs of the Christian world, Acacius of Constantinople, Peter Mongus of Alexandria, and Peter Fullo of Antioch, subscribed this decree which, doubtless, would have finally resulted in the establishment of the Monophysite doctrine in the East. But when the defenders of Chalcedon discovered the probable tendencies of the Henoticon, they began to oppose it warmly, in which they were joined by the ultra Monophysites, whom nothing would content, short of the total condemnation of that council and its decrees.*

The Henoticon, though it failed in effecting the union of the different parties in the Church, produced a modification of the Eutychian or Monophysite doctrine, which seems to have been first propounded by Xenaias and Fullo, two of the chief leaders of the Monophysites. They taught, what indeed their followers received, and hold at the present day, that in the Son of God there was one nature, which, notwithstanding its unity was double and compounded. This seeming self-contradictory tenet, was adopted, doubtless, to avoid expressing their assent in words to the council of Chalcedon, while, in point of fact, they admitted in substance the doctrine which it inculcated.

* Mosheim, Lib. i. cent. IV. Assem., tom. ii. Dissertatio de Monophysitis.

Digitized by Google

The Emperors Justin and Justinian persecuted the Monophysites with the most unrelenting severity, so that during the sixth century their numbers seem to have greatly diminished. The latter emperor seized and imprisoned the principal leaders of the sect, and endeavoured to force them to give in their adhesion to the council of Chalcedon. Fearing lest the interests of the community might suffer by their perpetual imprisonment or death, the captive prelates consecrated to the Episcopal office an obscure monk, whose name was Jacob Bar Adai, or Baradæus. Being a man of great energy, and industrious zeal, he went about reviving the drooping hopes of the Monophysites, and eventually succeeded in re-establishing the almost extinct community. He is said in the course of his travels to have ordained one hundred thousand priests and deacons, twenty bishops, one archbishop, and two Patriarchs, one of whom he established at Alexandria, and the other at Antioch. It is doubtful whether this account may be taken exactly to the letter, but it is certain that Baradæus may be considered as the second founder and restorer of the Monophysite sect; the Syrian members of which have derived from him the appellation of Jacobites. He ruled the see of Edessa as bishop for thirty-seven years, and died A. D. 578.

Digitized by Google

During the sixth century, a great and grievous plague seems to have invaded the regions of Asia, occupied chiefly by the Monophysites. An account of this fearful visitation has been transmitted to us by John, who at that time was the chief bishop of the sect in Asia. He prefaces his narration by the declaration that he had received a sort of inquisitorial commission from Justinian, to search for the professors of the ancient Pagan idolatry, great numbers of whom were concealed in the cities of Asia, under the external cloak of conformity to Christianity. Many persons distinguished for their rank and learning were detected among the recusants, one of whom, named Phocas, a man of patrician dignity, when he found himself betrayed to Justinian, swallowed poison, and died. His body was thrown into a pit, and exposed to public view, while the other Pagans were ordered to assemble themselves in the Syrian Church, and receive instruction from John in the doctrines of Christianity. The indefatigable prelate records that he traversed with unwearied diligence the regions of Asia, Caira, Lydia, and Phrygia, where he converted and baptized seventy thousand individuals. It seems strange, however, that Justinian, who was known to be most inimical to the Monophysites, should have intrusted such important avocations to one whom he

Digitized by Google

must have considered a perverse and obstinate heretic.

The year following that in which John accomplished his arduous mission, he relates that the city of Cyzicum was visited by an earthquake, while a comet of fearful magnitude appeared in the west. Brazen vessels, manned by headless navigators, were reported to have been discovered at sea, directing their course towards those places which were afterwards visited by the plague. This fearful scourge overran Gaza, Ascalon, the whole region of Palestine, and pursued its course over the countries of Mesopotamia, Cilicia, Mysia, and Bithynia.

In Egypt, a whole city was depopulated by the plague, with the exception of seven men, and a boy of ten years of age. The survivors employed themselves in collecting together the riches of the town, which they gathered into one immense heap; and afterwards the men fell down and expired. The lad, affrighted at what had befallen his companions, left the treasure and fled. He reached the gate in safety, but was there met by a spectral form, who persuaded him to return to the place where he had left his companions. The youth obeyed, and perished.

At another city in the confines of Palestine, the inhabitants were deceived by some evil spirits who

Digitized by Google

assumed the garb and appearance of angels, and persuaded the people that they should be safe from the plague, if they would adore a brazen image to be found in the market-place. The townsmen complied with the insidious suggestion, but soon had reason to repent of their credulity. As soon as they commenced the idolatrous ceremony, a violent storm arose, the wind raised the statue to the height of a thousand cubits in the air, after which it fell with such violence that it was dissolved by the shock to powder, and all the men of the place were instantly seized with the plague and died.

In Antioch itself, sepulchres were wanting for the numerous bodies which required burial. It was said that vessels were thrown from on high upon the earth, filled with vapours, which escaped, and disseminated everywhere the fatal disorder. The villages and towns in the neighbourhood were deserted by the superstitious peasantry, who affirmed that evil spirits had been seen traversing the country, in the attire of priests and monks, thus casting discredit on the members of the sacred order.

Meanwhile the plague directed its devastating course eastwards, in the direction of Amida and Nisibis. Earthquakes prevailed in all parts of Asia, and, to add to the miseries of the time, the Jews and

Digitized by Google

Samaritans broke out into rebellion, and massacred great numbers of the Christians in Palestine. Soon after, the principal cities of Galilee and Phœnicia were much injured by earthquakes, and the sea receded for about two miles from the usual water mark. Towards the termination of these troubles, a meteor appeared in the air, shaped like a lance, which was quickly followed by the death of the Emperor Justinian.*

After this period, the Monophysites seem to have increased greatly in numbers, though they were from time to time visited by persecutions. An Oriental writer relates, that among other grievances, they were often made to serve as steeds for the Orthodox, and the unfortunate heretic who possessed the unenviable qualification of broad shoulders, was frequently obliged to groan beneath the weight of a stout and portly member of the Imperial or Melchite Church. During the seventh and eighth centuries, we found them aiding the Moslem invaders against their Greek oppressors, though by so doing, they only exchanged one species of servitude for another. At the commencement of the ninth century, a Syrian bishop presided over a large congregation in the city of

* I have drawn the above statements from the 'chronicle of the Bishop John. He seems to have been somewhat credulous, but the main facts are corroborated by Theophanes and Procopius.

Digitized by Google

Baghdad, which had recently been founded by the Caliph Al Mansoor.

During the ninth century, a question was much agitated between the Syrian and Egyptian Monophysites, concerning the propriety of mixing the bread of the Eucharist with oil and salt, which occasioned, for a time, the cessation of intercommunion between them. Peace was afterwards restored, and the Syrians have ever since regarded the Copts and Abyssinians as brethren. Towards the end of this period, Moses Bar Cepha was patriarch of the Jacobites, and published several works, which were highly esteemed by the sect. In his Dissertation on Paradise he advanced an opinion, still generally received among the Syrians, that the Garden of Eden, from which Adam was expelled, is still existing, though invisible, and receives the souls of the just and pious, to remain there until the day of the resurrection. He was the author of two Liturgies, and wrote commentaries on the Syriac Ritual.

In the tenth century, a Jacobite Patriarch, named John, was led captive to Constantinople, where he defended the Monophysite doctrine in the presence of the Greek Emperor, Nicephorus Phocas, and the Patriarch Polyeuctes. His description of his reception at the imperial city is addressed to the Coptic Primate,

Digitized by Google

Mennas, and contains some curious particulars, a few of which I shall transcribe.

"The Greek Emperor commanded that the Patriarch should send for us, which order he obeyed, and we waited upon him the Thursday before Palm Sunday, when he received us in the presence of a large body of his clergy. Before we reached his palace, a number of men met us, who endeavoured by loud outcries to make us afraid. But God, in consideration of thy acceptable prayers, afforded us both fortitude and patience.

"After some time, we came to the palace of the Patriarch, which is a large edifice, surrounded by soldiers and a large crowd of attendants. When we had saluted him, and he had returned our salutation, he enquired, 'Of what place art thou Patriarch?' We answered, 'We are Bishop of the see of Antioch.'"

After this, some conversation took place respecting the theological sentiments of the Jacobites, which John avowed boldly, and without disguise. He was then allowed to return, but was subsequently sent for by the Emperor, whose proceedings he thus describes.

"He caused us to enter their great church (Sancta Sophia) and showed us all the ecclesiastical ornaments, the robes, veils, and lamps, with the multitudes of people who flocked daily thither, thinking that we

Digitized by Google

should be moved like children by the sight of these perishable things. Then, after he had communicated, he began to speak harshly to us, accusing us of dividing Christ, and urging against us the saying of Paul, in which he represents one as asserting I am of Cephas, and another, I am of Christ. To which accusations we were enabled, by God's help, to make a suitable reply.

"On Easter, the Emperor again sent for us, and said, 'The Moslem and the Jews continually reproach us with our divisions, and point out how some are called Melkites, others Jacobites, and others Nestorians. What, then, is the cause of the schism between you and ourselves? Let us come together and search the Scriptures for two or three months, and having found out truth, let us all follow it.'"

An interview afterwards took place between the Jacobite and the Greek Patriarchs, in the course of which, the former reproached the Melkites with holding the opinions of Nestorius, a charge indignantly denied. The epistle concludes with the expression of the writer's stedfast determination to maintain firmly the tenets of the Monophysites, and with a request that he may be aided and supported by the prayers of Mennas.

At the commencement of the eleventh century

Digitized by Google

John, the son of Abdon, was elected Patriarch of the Jacobites. He was the first who moved the seat of the Patriarchate from Antioch to Malatiah, a city of Armenia. Before his election he lived a solitary life, on the Black mountain near Antioch, in company with a brother anchorite, who was also named John. The Patriarch Athanasius had, on his deathbed, designated the son of Abdon as his successor, which fact, according to his biographer, was miraculously announced to John in a vision. The modest hermit resolved to decline the intended dignity, and, addressing his friend, he related to him what had occurred, and also his determination to conceal himself from those who were on their way to invest him with Patriarchal rank. But the other, who nourished beneath his hermit's gown a spirit of worldliness and ambition, resolved to remain, and to accept the proffered dignity.

The son of Abdon replied, "I will not submit to bear the burden of worldly honour, nor can I endure to be torn away from this blessed retreat where I have spent so many happy years. But if thou deemest that thou canst support this yoke, remain, and take it on thyself. As for me, I shall seek to conceal myself until this calamity be overpast."

Having said these words, he fled away, and con-

Digitized by Google

cealed himself in the recesses of the mountain, leaving his companion to receive the deputation, who, arriving on the following day, found the other John awaiting them, and supposing him to be the person intended, saluted him Patriarch. The ambitious monk gladly accepted the honour, and took his departure in company with the others. But as they were journeying to Antioch, the sun being very oppressive, they reposed for a short time under a tree, the boughs of which happened to strike the monk on the eyes, and blinded him. Conscience-stricken, he related what had passed between him and the son of Abdon, who was immediately sought for, and installed against his will, Patriarch of Antioch.

The city of Malatiah, in his day, was a large and flourishing town, containing fifty-six churches, and about sixty thousand males, among whom were reckoned a small number of Melkites who raised great troubles, and finally succeeded in procuring the imprisonment of the Jacobite patriarch. It is now, however, in a semi-ruinous state, owing to the misgovernment of the Turks.

During the following century, Dionysius Bar Salibi occupied the Patriarchal throne, a man noted for piety and learning. He composed several works on Theological subjects, among which we find a curious dis-

Digitized by Google

quisition on bells*, the invention of which he ascribes to Noah. He mentions that several histories record a command given to that patriarch to strike on the bell with a piece of wood three times a day, in order to summon the workmen to their labour while he was building the ark, and this he seems to consider the origin of church bells, an opinion which, indeed, is common to other Oriental writers.

We find, in the writings of Bar Salibi, a distinct admission of the doctrine of Consubstantiation, for he affirms that the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist were the same that were born of the blessed Virgin, and this opinion seems still to be entertained by many of the later Syrians, although they do not admit the Roman definition of the change of substance. In another place, he illustrates the union of the body and blood of the Redeemer to the elements, by the example of the junction of fire and iron in a red hot bar.

In the thirteenth century, flourished the learned Gregorius Bar Hebræus, a most voluminous writer in Arabic and Syriac, and who obtained from the Mohammedans the appellation of Abou'l Farraj, which has

* The original word alludes rather perhaps to the sounding boards of wood or metal which are generally substituted for bells in the East.

Digitized by Google

been Latinized into Abulpharagius. He was born in the city of Malatiah, and his father seems to have been a Jewish convert, from which circumstance he derived the name of Bar Hebrai, the son of the Hebrew. In A.D. 1243, the Tartars invaded the territory of Malatiah, and laid siege to the city, but their assault was warded off by the prudence and courage of the Syrian archbishop, who, assembling the citizens, exhorted them to take arms, and repel the assailants. In the following year, Bar Hebræus repaired to Antioch, where he devoted himself to an ascetic life. From thence, after a short time, he went to Tripoli, where he was ordained priest and bishop by Ignatius, the Jacobite Patriarch. In A.D. 1264, he was elected to the high dignity of Primate of the East, which he held for twenty-two years.

The Patriarch of the Jacobites had found it necessary, in consequence of the incursions of the Tartars, to fix his abode in Western Syria, and to delegate the affairs of the East to a metropolitan, who was termed the Maphrian, or Primate, and fixed his chief residence at Mosul. Bar Hebræus found his new office, however, full of trouble and anxiety. The ravages of the barbarians had alarmed and impoverished the people. Great numbers had taken flight while those that remained were in daily fear

Digitized by Google

that their property might be seized, and their towns and villages destroyed. Much mischief, also, had arisen from the discord between the Nestorians and the Jacobites, the former frequently making use of their influence with the Caliphs and the Tartar sovereigns to oppress their co-religionists. By his prudent and forbearing measures, however, the new Maphrian succeeded in winning the favour of Hulaku Khan, and of his Christian consort, and of conciliating the esteem of the Nestorian Catholicos. When Bar Hebræus visited Baghdad, the latter despatched his nephew, and some of the principal men of the city, to meet his brother of Mosul, and escort him into the city of peace. For the first time since the division of the sects, Nestorians and Jacobites joined together in celebrating the solemn rites of Easter.

The Maphrian returned soon after to Mosul, where, however, he remained but a short time, as the condition of his community required his continual oversight. Indefatigable in his exertions, he passed from place to place, ordaining bishops and priests, rebuilding ruined churches, and obtaining from the Tartar monarchs fresh privileges for his sect. When, at the decease of the Patriarch, he was accused of aspiring to this high station, the Maphrian of the East could reply with pardonable pride that he coveted no higher honour

Digitized by Google

than that which he already possessed, of enjoying the fruits of a calm and tranquillity, which his own exertions had obtained for his extensive diocese.

In his sixtieth year, this great and excellent man felt a presentiment that his last hour was drawing nigh. By the persuasion of his friends, he had translated his Chronicle, one of the most valuable works in Oriental literature, from the Syriac into the Arabic language. Soon after he had finished his labours, he was seized with a fever, for which he refused to receive medical treatment, saying that he was sensible that the end of his life was at hand. With the calm composure of a Christian, he called for his papers, and dictated to his weeping secretary several important instructions. He then received the Eucharist, and charging the survivors to remain in love and charity with each other, the Maphrian of the East breathed his last.

Mar Jaballaha, the Catholicos of the Nestorians, had no sooner heard of his decease, than he hastened to pay the last honours to one, whose character, notwithstanding their difference in creed, he could not but respect and esteem. Nestorians, Armenians, Greeks, and Jacobites united in forming the mournful procession which accompanied to the grave the corpse of the deceased Maphrian; a solemn funeral service was

Digitized by Google

performed by each, and even the Mohammedans paid a decent tribute to the memory of a man, whose writings had enriched the literature of their country, and handed down to posterity the actions of their most renowned Caliphs.

The prolific genius of Bar Hebræus displayed itself in the various subjects which he treated. Among his writings we find treatises on logic, astronomy, and physics; in grammar, history, poetry, and theology, he was equally celebrated, while the most learned doctors of Arabia acknowledged that in ethics and the abstruse sciences his dictum was equal to that of Aristotle himself. The disciples who bewailed his departure, spoke of him in terms of affectionate praise as a glorious and shining lamp, and as the strong and stately pillar which had hitherto sustained the weak and trembling fabric of Jacobism.

The charity of the deceased Maphrian shone no less brightly than his intellectual acquirements and his other moral virtues. The friend and favourite of princes, he delighted to live in a small apartment, where he was accessible to the meanest of his flock. Money he so much despised, that he distributed to the poor nearly the whole of his annual income, reserving only so much as was needed for the necessaries of life. The members of his flock strove, by stealth, to force

Digitized by Google

presents upon him, and while kissing his hand, contrived to insert some coins beneath the mattress of the diwan. The biographer relates, with naïve simplicity, the astonishment of the good bishop when the matting was raised, and a whole shower of gold or silver pieces poured down upon the floor. They did not however, remain there long, but were quickly transferred to the numerous poor families who waited about the Episcopal portals, many of whom were supported by the benevolence of Bar Hebræus. Sometimes, however, the accumulated store amounted to so large an amount as to cause the bishop no small anxiety respecting the future disposal of it.

The affairs of the Jacobite community since the death of Bar Hebræus have generally been in a declining state. A long series of Patriarchs might, indeed, be enumerated, yet the account of their actions could afford little interest, as it would be little more than a list of ordinations, and of disputes which rarely yield the reader either entertainment or edification. About the seventeenth century, the efforts of the Roman missionaries induced many to ally themselves to a new community, which was entitled the Syrian Catholic church, and which has been steadily on the increase ever since. By the aid of the French political agents, the Syrian Catholics

Digitized by Google

obtained many of the churches, and carried on an active system of proselytism, which was not always contented to rely exclusively on the force of argument for success. The Jacobites affirm that much fraud and cruelty was resorted to, for the purpose of bringing over persons to the new church, and I once saw a manuscript history in Arabic, which charged the adherents of Rome with many acts of violence.

The Syrian Catholics, however, are not much altered, as far as externals are concerned, from their heretical brethren. Their priests are still allowed to marry and to use the Syriac language in the divine service, while their liturgies and offices have undergone a few trifling emendations. They have consented to receive the Council of Chalcedon, to admit its canons as a rule of faith, and, what is, perhaps, of more importance in the eyes of their Italian instructors, to acknowledge the supremacy of the Roman pontiff. A Syrian Catholic prelate, however, still resides at Antioch, who claims the title of Patriarch of the East.

Besides the divisions above alluded to, it is said that a large body of the Jacobite Syrians are desirous of effecting some reformation in the usages of their church. They generally, however, adhere with considerable pertinacity to their peculiar dogma of the

Digitized by Google

one nature, and entertain the most decided aversion towards any change in this particular. The Jacobites on the coast of India, who are generally known by the title of Malabar Syrians, receive their bishop from the Patriarch of Mardin, but it is said that, owing to the dissensions which have arisen among them, their numbers are rapidly decreasing. The agents of the Church Missionary Society have, I believe, induced many to join the Church of England, while others have gone over to the Romish Syrians, so that it is not improbable that the Indo-Jacobites may soon become entirely extinct.

With the exception, perhaps, of the Armenians, who are also distracted by many divisions, there seem to be strong symptoms of decay visible in all the Christian systems of the East. They appear to have lasted the appointed time, and to be rapidly declining in number. Perhaps the next fifty years may render the names even of the Jacobites and Nestorians a matter of history, while the descendants of those who now bear them will be found ranged under the banners of other communions.*

* For a concise view of the different Christian sects of the East, the reader may consult with profit a small pamphlet, entitled "The Eastern Churches," published by Mr. Darling, of Queen Street.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XI.

Departure from Mosul. Halt of a Caravan. Giorgio. Sinjar, and its Ancient Associations. Ruins of Dara. The Delli Ali. False Alarm. Mode of escaping from Arabs.

The period of my residence at Mosul was now fast drawing to a close, and I had before me the daily anticipation of leaving a place to which, notwithstanding the many disadvantages attendant on an European's life in the East, I still look back with no small amount of regret. The freedom of social intercourse, the simple manners, and the unaffected goodness of heart, which distinguish many individuals among the Orientals, display themselves to advantage when one considers the artificial polish and hollowness of what is termed civilized life. Yet it cannot be denied that a person of cultivated mind would often recall, at certain seasons the charms of a more educated, social circle,

Digitized by Google

than he could encounter on the banks of the Tigris. Nor can the magnificent associations, or the splendid traditions of the East, supply the place of a home, or dispel, entirely, the feeling of loneliness with which a stranger surveys the foreign crowd around him. I can hardly tell, therefore, whether, speaking with regard only to mere personal feelings, I felt more pleased or grieved at leaving a place which, according to the tales of its inhabitants, formed anciently a part of Paradise.

When the day of departure arrived, there were many, who had grown from mere acquaintances into old friends, to take leave of—with almost the certainty that we should never meet again. This was, of course, far from agreeable, nor is the recollection of it less unwelcome; wherefore I must beg the reader to suppose the last words of farewell spoken, and ourselves outside the gate of Mosul. We intended to take the shortest road over the plains of Sinjar to Nisibis, and from thence to travel by way of Diarbekir, across the flat country of Mesopotamia, to Aleppo.

As the road by the desert was considered unsafe, we obtained from the Executive of Mosul a cortége of Albanians, who were to escort us till we had placed ourselves beyond the reach of danger. We had no Tatar with us, but hired horses to Aleppo from a

Digitized by Google

native of Mosul, and as soon as our intention became known, several merchants, who were travelling the same way, expressed their wish to join us, so that by the time we had proceeded for three hours on our way, our numbers had swelled into a tolerable caravan.

After a ride of fifteen miles, we reached a small Arab village called Ak Meidat, but as the mud huts did not seem very inviting, we pitched our tent, and prepared to spend the night under its shadow. By this time, a large number of persons from Mosul had joined our party, and as they had also brought tents with them, the plain soon presented the animated appearance of a military encampment. Numerous fires kindled in different parts of the heath, lit up the whole scene, and displayed to advantage the variously dressed figures who surrounded them.

Near one of these were assembled our Albanian escort, whose richly laced jackets and buskins sparkled brightly in the glare of the flame, which lent additional lustre also to their sabres and ornamented pistol butts. Having few of the scruples entertained by ordinary Mohammedans, they had brought with them some wine-skins, by the aid of which they proposed to beguile the drowsy hours of the night.

A group of sober, staid Moslems not far from them, regarded with looks, in which dislike was mingled

Digitized by Google

with fear, the unlawful proceedings of those whom in confidence they would doubtless have stigmatised as semi-Kafirs and Fermasoon.* They themselves were imbibing the more sober beverage of coffee, and smoking their chibouques, speaking little, but appearing to be engaged in profound meditation over their pipes. Others were busy in preparing their provisions for a night repast, while some were attending to their steeds, and getting their baggage ready for the next day's march.

As the evening drew on, a band of musicians who had arrived from Mosul, began to play in the midst of the encampment, while three of the Albanians danced the Romaika with great spirit. The attitudes of this celebrated dance struck me as awkward and inelegant; but there was a wild savage air about it which agreed tolerably with the appearance and apparel of the performers. An old man with a cracked voice, began to sing a very nasal ditty about the chains and torments of love; but the sentiments, however naturally poetical they might be in the abstract, derived little embellishment from the manner in which they were

* The term Fermasoon, which, I believe, is a corruption of "Freemason," is used in the East to express a person void of religion. It is frequently applied to Protestants, and to Englishmen, concerning whose theological tenets the utmost ignorance prevails in the East.

Digitized by Google

set forth. A musical Albanian nearly excited a quarrel in his attempt to possess himself of one of the singers guitars, but a few paras arranged matters, and he was allowed the loan of the instrument. He seated himself on the grass, with a circle of his companions around him, and with a fearful grimace, which was evidently an attempt to look interesting and sentimental, he shouted forth a ditty, the refrain of which greatly resembled in sound the syllables bow wow. I was told, however, that it was a very romantic lament, poured forth by a despairing swain to some iron-hearted beauty, who was eventually so overcome by it, that she bestowed on the singer her hand and heart. The rude mercenaries seemed much affected by it, perhaps because it reminded them of their distant mountain-land.

We were accompanied from Mosul by a Greek servant, who had, for the last three or four years, been residing with Mr. Rassam. Giorgio, in that time, had grown somewhat tired of "the barbarians," as his ancestors would have called them, and as he thought them in his inmost soul. In theological matters, however, his liberality might have edified those enlightened persons in the nineteenth century, who make it a point of conscience to commend and speak well of every form of religion except their own. On great

Digitized by Google

festivals he was always to be seen holding a very large candle in the Chaldean and Syrian processions. Like a true Greek, however, he maintained the superiority of the Melchite Church to all other communions, and considered the Pope of Rome as unworthy to bear the slippers of the Patriarch of Constantinople. But Giorgio's chief delight was to talk of the exploits of his father in the Greek war, where he had been a very Achilles to the infidels. At first, indeed, I could hardly understand these narratives which he poured into my very willing ears as we rode side by side over some dull, uninteresting level; but at length I managed to pick up some words of Italian, by the aid of which, and a shrewd guess now and then at the meaning of a modern Greek phrase, we contrived to get on very well together.

Giorgio told me his father was a respectable farmer in Attica, who, after his belligerent doings, had taken as a second spouse, a comely widow from Scio, but she proved such an ill step-mother, that the son, who inherited all the paternal spirit, was glad to quit his father's house, and go off to Constantinople. At the metropolis he engaged in the service of some Franks, but rarely staid very long in one place, for like Ulysses, he was fond of seeing the world. After many misadventures, he entered the employ of Mr.

Digitized by Google

Rassam, with whom he had travelled for some months in Asia Minor; and eventually accompanied him to Mosul. During his wandering and adventurous life, he had picked up many accomplishments—which were both useful and ornamental. He was a very good cook, a tolerable groom; he could make and mend clothes, play and sing a little, and dance the Romaika. He spoke Greek, Turkish, Italian, and broken English. Few better understood how to deal with the true believers, whose dignity he astonished sometimes by a lash from his whip. Perhaps no one could be more suited for our purpose, and all of us agreed, when the journey was over, that we had derived more assistance from Giorgio, than we should have gained from twenty Tatars.

But the dawn is now breaking, and the whole encampment are rousing themselves from the slumbers which succeeded their revelry. The baggage horses have been laden, the tents struck, and the whole of the cavalcade is once more en route. A red glow illuminates the distant summits of the Kurdish mountains and of Jebel Makloub. Behind us are the minarets of Mosul, while around, on every side, extend the plains of Sinjar, terminated to the eastward by the Tigris.

Near Ak Meidat we crossed a stone bridge with

Digitized by Google

two arches, built over a rivulet whose brackish waters are said to produce great numbers of fish. Under one of these arches we noticed a trap or net set for catching crabs, with which the stream abounded.

In two hours and a half we arrived at Hegnah, a small tell or mound surmounted by a ruined castle, on the gate of which was an inscription in Arabic, stating that it had been rebuilt in the year of the Hegira 1212. We halted for the day at the foot of the tell, near which was a pool of brackish water, plentifully stocked with frogs. Several of these unpleasant reptiles crawled into our tent, where they sat for some minutes staring at the strangers, and then disappeared to join their comrades in a croaking chorus, which interrupted my intended mid-day siesta.

From Hegnah we rode on to Aiwainat, another mound situated at the edge of a large plain, which presented a very gay appearance, being covered with the tents of the soldiers, who had gone forth to meet and welcome the new Pasha Report seemed to augur favourably of his character. Although not exactly one of the reforming school, it was said that Shereef Pasha was a man of humane and merciful disposition, strictly just and upright in his dealings; in short, a very fair specimen of an Osmanli ruler.

There were several troops of irregulars who accom-

Digitized by Google

panied the Nizam Djedeed, and I could not help contrasting their gay and showy exteriors with the wretched Frank uniforms of the new regiments, who seemed to feel themselves shackled and fettered by their jackets and pantaloons. They none of them wore any stockings, and those who were not actually on duty wandered about in a loose unbuttoned state, which might be comfortable, but which did not exactly respond to our ideas of propriety. The poor fellows seemed to feel themselves in a most uneasy situation, and evidently were at a loss how to manage their new clothes.

On one occasion, I met at the table of Mr. Rassam, the Kaimakam of Mosul, a stout swarthy Kurd, who, as a Government official, had been doomed to submit to the rigours of the Frank costume. When he sat down to dinner, however, old habits suddenly assumed the predominance; with much difficulty, he stripped up his sleeves as far as the elbow, and began to demolish the eatables with his fingers. The poor man, however, appeared so stiff and uncomfortable, that I could not help wishing him safely returned to his jibba and zeboon.

From Aiwainat we had a long and tedious ride of twelve hours to Rumaleh. The roads were very muddy, as rain had fallen on the preceding day. The

Digitized by Google

latter part of the march also was in darkness, and the sudden sinking of our horses, every now and then, in some bog or quagmire was the reverse of agreeable.

The nature of the surrounding country was by no means adapted to relieve the tedium of a caravan march. The flats were indeed varied by slight excrescences here and there, and sometimes by mounds of a larger size, but there was little to attract attention, or to call off the mind from the dull monotonous tramp of the hired horses. I longed for a gallop, but our steeds were not accustomed to quick movements, and, as we had a long journey before us, it was necessary to husband their strength. When we arrived at Rumaleh I felt quite exhausted, and, hastily dismounting, I wrapped my cloak round me, and fell asleep on the grass.

The next morning we pitched our tent at the foot of a small eminence, and determined to await the arrival of the Pasha, who was expected to reach Rumaleh at nine o'clock A.M. Before he came, however, the Diwan Effendisi, whom we also found at Rumaleh, sent to borrow a bottle of brandy, as he felt slightly indisposed. The bottle was sent, and returned the next morning empty, but I believe the invalid made B— some small present as an acknowledgment of the kindness.

Digitized by Google

Drums and trumpets sounded merrily as the Pasha approached the tell with his escort. The whole plain was covered with horsemen galloping to and fro, and discharging their firearms in the air. Shouts and acclamations resounded on all sides, as the Pasha dismounted, and entered the tent which had been prepared for his reception. Soon after his arrival, B— and I went to drink coffee with him, and were much pleased with the politeness and affability of his manners. Yet the appearance of an Eastern ruler is sometimes deceptive in the extreme. I once went at Constantinople to visit a chieftain whose name has been associated with many a deed of blood and crime. We found a venerable man with a long snowy beard, which gave him a most paternal and patriarchal aspect. Nothing could be milder, more pious, or more resigned than his conversation. He described himself as the victim of undeserved calumny and persecution, and spoke of his enemies with the calm forgiveness with which a good man regards those who have injured him. His devout resignation to the will of Heaven was most edifying, and few that looked upon that venerable countenance, or watched the repose of that aged eye, could believe that there had been a time when both were lit up by the fiercest passions which can agitate the bosom of man.

Digitized by Google

From Rumaleh we proceeded to Aznaoor, a Kurdish village in the territory of Bedr Khan Bey, where we pitched our tents under the shade of some trees. From hence we rode on in the evening to Geri Zaina, a small village containing four families of Syrian Christians. It had formerly been a place of some size, but, like other towns and villages in these parts, was now reduced to a few miserable huts.

We had just been traversing the northern part of the plains of Shinar, on which, if the hypothesis advocated in a former chapter be correct, was situated the ancient Babel, mentioned in the early part of the Book of Genesis. The kingdom of Shinar is first spoken of in Genesis xiv., where an expedition is recorded, in which its monarch seems to have borne a considerable share. In company with Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, Arioch, king of Ellasar, and Tidal, king of Nations, he is described as making war against the kings or chiefs of Canaan. I am disposed to identify Ellasar with the modern Tel-Afer, mentioned by Mr. Layard as situated three hours' ride from Mosul.* Elam seems to imply the kingdom of Persia, while the Nations may have been different scattered tribes lately united under one head.

The races dwelling in northern Mesopotamia, seem

* Nineveh and its Remains, vol. i. chap. ix.

Digitized by Google

to have acquired at an early period the appellation of Chasdim, though some circumstances would lead us to imagine that it was not generally adopted till after the birth of Abraham. Their dominion extended to the Euphrates, if we admit the identity of Urfah with the ancient Ur. At the time of the expedition alluded to in Scripture, they seem to have advanced into the northern parts of Syria, as the Karnak Tablet mentions the Khita, a people whom Mr. Birch successfully identifies with the Chaldeans, as seated at Helbon, the modern Aleppo. A very current tradition prevalent in the East, derives the appellation of Haleb, or Aleppo, which signifies "he milked," from the supposition that Abraham tarried here to milk his cows, while on his way to Palestine. He, therefore, most probably journeyed by the same route which a modern traveller would take, passing through Aleppo, and repairing thence by way of Hems to Damascus.

It remains an open question how far the chiefs of Shinar were independent of the power of Elam, as the people of Canaan are mentioned in Genesis as tributaries of the latter country. Yet it is not certain that Elam implies the whole of the country which is now known by the name of Persia. It seems more to refer to the regions eastward of the Kurdish mountains. Elam was the brother of Asshur, and, therefore, there

Digitized by Google

appears to be a close connexion between the Elamites and the early Assyrians, whose territories were probably contiguous. If so, this seems to bear strongly upon the fact of the northern position of Shinar, and corroborates the hypothesis respecting Babel.

During the captivity of the children of Israel in Egypt, the kings of that country appear to have come in collision with the Chaldeans of Shinar, and the inhabitants of central Asia. To this period, I should feel disposed to refer the events recorded in the Karnak Tablet. A confederation seems to have taken place among the Mesopotamian and Assyrian chiefs. The members of this alliance are given as follows*:

ARUTA [Ararat].
AR-HENA [Iran].
TEN-TEN-I [Tanais].
KARUKAMASHA [Carchemish].
RUKA [Ragæ. Media].
KESH-KESH [Caucasus].
CHIRUBU [Chalybes Aleppo].

We find here a number of nations mentioned, the general position of which correspond remarkably with the localities alluded to in Genesis. The Aruta were the people inhabiting the vicinity of those mountains

* Observations on the Karnak Tablet, by Samuel Birch, Esq.

Digitized by Google

called, in modern times, Jebel Judi; and were, doubtless, the same as those whose monarch is alluded to in Scripture as the king of Shinar. We find in the inscription, Ar-hena and Ruka, which agree with the Elam of Genesis, while the Scythians of Ten-ten-i, and of Kesh-kesh, may be represented by the Goyim, or Nations of which Tidal is mentioned as the chief or sovereign.

The Tablet goes on to commemorate the exploits of the Egyptian sovereigns against these people of northern Naharaina (Mesopotamia). Rameses II. marches into their country, and subdues "the wretched chief of the Khita (Chaldeans), and the numerous lands that are with him, the Arutu, the Maasu, the Shasu, the Kesh-kesh, the Ar-hena, the Katuata, with the Chirubu, the Ati, and the Ruka." Another expedition is then recorded against "the Ruten—northern lands behind the great sea." We find in this account the following list of captives;

Khita (who are probably the Chasdim, or Chaldeans, which seems to have been, at an early period, a generic appellation for the inhabitants of northern Mesopotamia and Assyria).

Naharaina (Mesopotamia Proper).

Upper Ruten (Mr. Birch conjectures that these were the Cappadocians).

Digitized by Google

Lower Ruten. (Probably the Upper Ruten may have designated the mountaineers of the Taurus, and the Lower, the inhabitants of the plains at the foot of that range.)

Saen-Kara (Singara, or Sinjar) the Shinar of Genesis x. The northern position of Shinar seems here established, though, perhaps, in after ages, the same appellation might be applied to regions farther south.*

Mention is made also of the capture of a fort, or fortified city, entitled Atesh, or Atet, which is described in the Tablet as "situated on a circular island, in the centre of a large river, flanked by two bridges." It lay close to the Ruten (Cappadocians), and the Luden (Lydians), and seems to have been in the vicinity of Saen-Kara, or Sinjar. It was garrisoned by a Chaldean people, and was not distant from the Chaboras. Mr. Birch considers this fort, Haditha, on the east bank of the Euphrates; but though I am sorry to differ from so eminent an authority on the subject of Antiquities, I should, with all due submission, suggest, whether the insular position of the fort does not correspond remarkably with the site of the modern Jezirah, which is surrounded by two arms of the Tigris, and is close to both Mesopotamia, Sinjar, and Cappadocia. Many other considerations concur

* Observations on the Karnak Tablet.

Digitized by Google

in rendering this view probable. In the vicinity of Jezirah flows the modern Habor, or Khabour, which is nearly identical with the word Chaboras, or Khaboras, found in the Tablet.* The position of this insular town must have been in the heart of the regions occupied by the confederates—a circumstance which rendered its capture of signal importance to the Egyptians, Mention is made of the drugs of Atesh, or Atet, which might refer to the gall nuts, still to be found in great quantities on the neighbouring mountains.

From all these considerations, it seems probable that the Shinar of Genesis, and the Saen-kara of the Tablet, are identical, and that the Chasdim, or Chaldeans, occupied the plain of Sinjar and the northern parts of Mesopotamia. Nor should I consider it unlikely, that the numerous tells, or mounds, which I have lately described, might, if excavated, be found to conceal more ancient remains even than those discovered in the plains of Nineveh. There can be little doubt that they are not natural excrescences, but accumulations of rubbish, covered, in process of time, with verdure. a description, indeed, that will apply to most of the small mounds in the vicinity of Mosul. The future enterprise of some industrious investigator may yet bring to light more astonishing relics of the past than

* Observations on the Karnak Tablet.

Digitized by Google

have hitherto been disclosed to the gaze of the curious, and the ancient history of Central Asia may become as familiar to our minds as that of Greece and Rome.

From Geri Zaina we proceeded to Nisibin, where we pitched our tent near the mausoleum of Mar Yacoub. Soon after our arrival here, a band of wandering musicians made their appearance, and desired leave to exhibit their talents before us. The company consisted of four men, and two boys whom we had taken, at a distance, for females from the nature of their attire. Their long, black hair was braided, and adorned with strings of coins, and they wore long red petticoats, which reached as far as the ankle, and were made like the under dresses of the Oriental women. They carried tambourines in their hands, which they beat from time to time during the dance. Their movements were the most ungraceful and unmeaning I ever witnessed, being nothing but a series of contortions, resembling the wriggling motion of a snake.

The men encouraged their exertions by the sound of their guitars, and the strains which one of the number poured forth with more zeal than ability. As the music continued, however, the enthusiasm of the performers increased. The boys leaped wildly from side to side, their cheeks glowing to a degree that

Digitized by Google

eclipsed the redness of the paint with which they were plastered. All the musicians joined in chorus, and produced, finally, yells of an awful and unearthly character. At last, wearied with their labours, they suddenly ceased, and, having received a small gratuity, departed to take a little repose. These people belonged to a tribe called the Delli Ali, a community which furnishes half the East with jugglers and mountebanks. They wander about from town to town, exhibiting their tricks, and sometimes perform in the houses of the respectable Mohammedans. I was informed that they were not celebrated for morality, and were generally reputed to be great thieves, whenever opportunities occurred of stealing with safety.

About fifteen miles from Nisibis are the ruins of Dara, which are situated between Nisibin and Mardin, at the distance of nearly a mile and a half from the road. Being desirous of inspecting them, we left our companions to go on the direct route, while we turned aside to see Dara. At our right was a low range of hills, which seem, in ancient times, to have been included under the appellation of Mount Masius, though the eminence which generally bears that name at present is farther to the north.

As we rode along, a Turkish Aga and his two servants joined us. He had a residence and some

Digitized by Google

landed property near Dara, and was what we should call a country gentleman. People of this class in Turkey very seldom mix themselves up in politics, or seek after official distinction. They remain at home in their paternal mansions, surrounded by their dependents, to whom they extend a rude, but ungrudging hospitality, and by whom they are in general beloved and respected.

It is singular that in these parts one rarely finds a man of good descent among the governors. Most of the latter have risen from the dregs of the people, or are the offspring of slaves. Some can neither read nor write, nor does their ignorance seem, in any way, to affect their position. The Agas form the sound portion of the Ottoman dominions, but their numbers are greatly diminishing, as their property becomes much depreciated in value by the tyranny of the Pashas and Mutsellims, who drive the poor people to despair by their exactions, and thus induce them to forsake their villages, and to abstain from cultivating the soil.

The Aga we met, appeared to be a sensible man, and better informed than most of his class. He had made several journeys to Constantinople, but he said he always returned with greater zest to his paternal domains. He admitted the tyranny of the Pashas,

Digitized by Google

and observed that oppression was, to use his own metaphor, eating up the land.

On arriving at Dara, we found the ruins situated on the slope of a hill, the summit of which was occupied by a few mud huts, inhabited chiefly by Armenian Christians, who possessed here a church and a priest. The remains were so extensive as to assume, at a distance, the appearance of a town, and we were particularly struck by the perfect condition of a tower, or minaret, which resembled very much the steeple and belfry of a church.

We pitched our tent at the foot of the hill, and having taken some refreshment, went on an exploring expedition among the ruins. Not far from the site we occupied, was a small rivulet, on the bank of which we discovered the remains of an ancient wall. The stones were very massive, measuring at least twelve feet by eight. We began to examine the ruins which lay towards the north-east, and found several buildings in an imperfect state, one or two only of the rooms remaining. The walls abounded with inscriptions. We found about ten tanks of stone filled with water. Each tank was contained in a large apartment, covered by a roof, and having the light admitted through a square aperture. The well-joined masses of stonework excited our

Digitized by Google

admiration, and accounted for the durability of these buildings.

In the opposite direction we found the remains of several quarries, which had probably supplied the stone for the old city. We proceeded through two galleries, or passages, and examined the caves which were cut in the stony soil on each side. Many of these had been used as tombs, but were now inhabited by the peasantry and their families, who tilled the neighbouring lands. We noticed several bas-reliefs over the entrances to these sepulchral grots. One was the emblem of the cross, surrounded by a wreath of cypress; another, a collection of skulls and bones, over which winged figures were hovering. The borders of the arched semicircles over each aperture were richly carved in the form of wreaths. One of the cells contained a fine sarcophagus of marble, nearly half of which was buried in the earth. Another was shaped like a pyramid, and seemed to have been divided into various compartments.

We next descended a flight of fifty-six stairs, which conducted us to a subterranean hall, supported by pillars, still retaining the marks of the staples to which chains had been attached. Several passages were connected with this apartment, leading to the ruins of an ancient castle, of which this place had

Digitized by Google

probably been the dungeon. A small, round opening in the roof let in a faint glimmer of light, but the obscurity was so great that we were obliged to bring torches with us.

After a lengthy examination of these remains, we returned to our tent, and were soon visited by a crowd of villagers, who were anxious to dispose of coins. They told us that in turning over the ground they often found "anteeka," a term learned from the Franks, and applied to every species of the relics of ancient days. Among those they showed us, were several coins of the Lower empire, of the Macedonians, and of the Parthians. Many were merely covered with Kufic inscriptions, without any figure. The peasants were willing to dispose of their discoveries at a very cheap rate, and, from what they said, it seemed that they would have little objection to the visit of some one who might make excavations on the site of Dara. From the general appearance, of the place, it appears likely to repay the exertions of some enterprising antiquarian, whose private means would enable him to commence operations without indulging the vain hope of assistance or reward from a government, who will be too happy to reap the fruit of labours which have cost them nothing.

According to Zacharias of Malatia, Dara was for-

Digitized by Google

tified by the orders of the Emperor Anastasius, to serve as a frontier garrison against the Persians. Assemani, in quoting the above-mentioned writer, seems to infer that it was then founded for the first time, yet it is likely that his expressions refer to the construction of a new town from the ruins of an older city. In the year 573 of the Christian Era, it was besieged by the Persians, under Chosroes, and again by the Arabs in A.D. 641. It was finally deserted and left to fall to decay towards the close of the eighth century.

We proceeded from the ruins to Mardin, a ride of about five hours, where we were kindly received by our old host Murad. He was still enjoying the sunshine of the governor's favour, though no one was more aware of its uncertain and precarious character.

We mounted with some difficulty to the citadel, which was situated on the top of the mountain, and commanded a magnificent prospect over the widely extended plains of Mesopotamia. After visiting the Pasha, we repaired to the quarters of the colonel of the Albanians to drink coffee. He received us in a small room lined with diwans: on the walls we noticed several pairs of handcuffs, and some fetters suspended. The colonel was a liberal Mohammedan, and ex-

Digitized by Google

pressed a strong desire for a bottle of brandy, but did not succeed in obtaining his wish. He conducted us over the citadel, where we observed several pieces of cannon, quietly rusting away.

At Mardin we waited for the arrival of the caravan, which entered the town some hours after us.—Kas Botros and Michael had accompanied it, and complained very much of the conduct of the headman who had tried to impose upon them. As, however, he was much terrified at the prospect of a complaint to the Pasha, he promised good behaviour for the rest of the journey, and we allowed him another trial.

During our journey from Mardin to Diarbekir, we received the intelligence that a band of mounted robbers were in pursuit of us, and were lurking on the other side of a low range of hills which skirted the road to the right. This piece of information caused us to halt and prepare for the onset of the marauders, as our horses would have been of little service in the event of a flight. Giorgio, who was in his element, took the command of the surredjees and other attendants, by whose aid he constructed with the baggage a species of barricade, behind which we were to shelter ourselves, and discharge our fire-arms.

The crisis was felt to be momentous. A fat mer-

Digitized by Google

chant of Mosul, crouched in agonies of terror behind a heap of saddle-bags, while his trusty sabre, which he had displayed before with no small amount of ostentation, lay unsheathed beside him. One of our Christian servants was invoking the aid of the Virgin and Saints, while a black dependant observed, that if we were fated to have our throats cut, no efforts of ours could avert it. This assurance was not very satisfactory or consolatory, but we determined to do our best, and loading our guns and pistols, we looked very determined and warlike behind our defences, while Giorgio volunteered to reconnoitre, and mounting his horse, galloped up the hill before us.

We watched his movements with some anxiety, expecting, at each moment, to see the white smoke of the enemy's guns rising above the summit of the eminence. Giorgio galloped along the broad ridge of the hill, and then disappeared on the other side. After a quarter of an hour, we again discerned him riding leisurely towards us: he brought the intelligence that no robbers were in the neighbourhood, and that all our warlike preparations were in vain.

This announcement reassured those of the party who had been looking forward with no slight tremor to the probable conflict. The stout merchant in the heat of his enthusiasm mounted his steed, and flourish-

Digitized by Google

ing his sabre, rode to the foot of the mountain, but was suddenly brought back by a shot which Giorgio fired in that direction. Those who had been most terrified handled their sabres and pistols, and boasted of the feats of valour which they would have performed.

It seems strange to recall now the sensation which I experienced when news was brought that no attack was to take place; I confess I felt somewhat disappointed, although I am not fond of fighting, and would at any time in the language of Shakespeare:—"Walk rather with Sir Priest than Sir Knight." Yet there seems to be something stirring and exciting in the prospect of a fray, which kindles the warm blood in our veins, and makes us feel that as far as the animal instinct is concerned, we are all lovers of strife. Philosophy may soften, and religion tame these impulses, but they exist in the breast of every child of Adam, and are liable to be only too easily called into action.

On one occasion two travellers were traversing a dangerous part of the wild country on the borders of Persia. One of them held tenets most averse to warlike proceedings of any kind, and averred that it was not lawful, even in self defence, to take any measure which would endanger human life. The other endeavoured to rebut his companion's arguments, and

Digitized by Google

convince him of the futility of his reasoning, but he failed in producing any impression on his friend's mind. While they were engaged in conversation, one of the attendants who had been dispatched on before, made his appearance, galloping hard, and breathless with haste and fear. He informed the travellers that eight mounted Kurds were advancing, who had fired at him as he rode on, and who were in fact close at his heels. The man of peace seemed somewhat disconcerted, but when the clattering of the Kurds' horses was heard, his hand stole towards his holsters, from which he extracted two well polished pistols, and, when the attack was made, signalized himself by the valour with which he joined in beating off the assailants.

We proceeded on our way in safety, and met with no further interruption from the sons of Ishmael, or the equally marauding Kurds. When we were in sight of Diarbekir, an individual of our party who had hitherto maintained the most profound silence, gave me the following recipe for obtaining the protection of the Arabs, which for its originality I deem worthy of insertion here. "If you are at any time attacked by these sons of dogs," said my instructor, "do not resist, for if you lift sword or gun against them, they will slay you without mercy. Endeavour

Digitized by Google

to touch them, and if you succeed you are safe; but if you are unable to do this, spit at them."

"And get my throat cut to a certainty," continued I.

"No, on my head," he replied, "you may save your life, for if anything that proceeds from you, even saliva touches their person or clothes, it is as though you touched them, and you have then a sacred and imperative claim upon their hospitality. I am telling you no falsehood, for a brother of mine, who did this, escaped out of their hands, and is still living at Baghdad."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER X I.

Diarbekir. Chaldean Ladies. Mar Athanasius. Italian Doctor. Remains. Inscriptions. Holy Fish.

The approach to Diarbekir from the direction of Mosul, presented some scenes which, though without pretensions to sublime beauty, possessed interest enough to attract the attention of a weary traveller. It was spring-time, and the flat plains were covered with verdure, while occasionally we crossed some winding rivulet, or, ascending the brow of a rocky eminence, obtained an extensive survey of the country around. The road we now took was different to that by which, on a former occasion, we had left Diarbekir, and presented more objects of interest to the eye. As we drew near the gate, our route lay between two rows of gardens, from whose blossoming flowers a sweet and agreeable odour diffused itself through the heated atmosphere.

Digitized by Google

We traversed on entering, the best and least ruinous quarter of Diarbekir, which even seemed to improve on acquaintance. The houses on each side of us were built of black stone, resembling the material used in the construction of the wall; while they possessed the luxury of glass windows, which had lately been somewhat of a rarity in our eyes during our late sojourn in Mosul. In my own dwelling at the latter place, I had been obliged to fill up the apertures with oiled paper, which however, answered the purpose for which I used it remarkably well.

We took up our quarters at the house of Khowajeh Bidoush, a Chaldean merchant well known to Mr. Rassam, who received us with great kindness and hospitality. A large room, well carpeted and filled with handsome diwans, was placed at our disposal, with two sleeping apartments for my friend and myself.

The next day after our arrival we visited another Chaldean gentleman whom we had seen before at Mosul, and were introduced to his wife and mother-in-law. The former was very youthful in her appearance and seemed shy and timid, but her mother was extremely lively and talkative. Notwithstanding that most Eastern women seem to grow old prematurely,

Digitized by Google

this lady did not appear much more than twenty-eight. Her manners were as polished and cultivated as any of her sex and station in Europe, nor did there seem any want of what some people call civilization, which, after all, is little better than a species of conventional hypocrisy. Both the ladies were richly attired, and wore a kind of round silver head-piece, bound round with folds of muslin. Their jackets were trimmed with gold lace, and rich shawls surrounded their waists. Their nails were stained with henna, a most odious custom in the eyes of an European, since it always seems as though the lady had just been digging up the ground with her fingers, and had retained about them some of the mould. Nor did the nose jewel appear a more appropriate ornament, though its antiquity pleads somewhat in its favour. I remember hearing on one occasion, that a Frank was asked by some Pasha or governor whether Europeans put rings in the noses of their women, to which the reply was, greatly to his Excellency's astonishment without doubt, "No, but we sometimes insert them in the snouts of our pigs."

We visited the principal Chaldean church. It was comparatively new, having been built only ten years, through French aid and influence I believe, as the erection of Christian edifices is forbidden by Moham-

Digitized by Google

medan law. There were four aisles, and a number of altars, richly decorated. I noticed also a vast profusion of silver lamps, censers, and other utensils used in the Chaldean service, which were made of the most costly materials. The pictures had been brought from Paris and Rome, but they were not distinguished by any particular merit in the execution.

From the church, we went to call upon Monsignore Pietro, the Chaldean Archbishop of Diarbekir, who no longer retains the title of patriarch. He was a good looking man about forty years of age, and had received his education at the Propaganda, where he remained for eleven years. He spoke Italian fluently, and possessed a very fair library for the East, which comprised some well written manuscripts relating exclusively to ecclesiastical matters. He seemed to approve of the Roman interference as tending to improve and civilize the East.

We then repaired to the Armenians, who have also a handsome church in this place. We found them, as usual, ill acquainted with the English Church, and perpetually confounding us with the American Dissenters, of whom they expressed a hearty dislike. They said, "Why do these people come here to overturn our old churches and to alter our customs, which

Digitized by Google

we have maintained since the days of the Apostles? We do not deny them the title of Christian, nor do we wish to meddle with their way of serving God. It may do for them, but we prefer to hold by the ancient customs, and the writings of the Holy Fathers. We do not send missionaries to America, though perhaps we may think they need them."

We saw at the Syrian church Mar Athanasius, a Jacobite prelate who had spent eleven months in London and at Cambridge. He spoke in high terms of England and her Church, and appeared to feel and appreciate the kindness which he had received from many of the English clergy, and particularly from the Bishop of London, whose name is known and respected by many of the Oriental Christians. I have often thought that the foundation of a scholarship at one of our Universities for young Oriental Christians, would tend greatly to benefit these Eastern communities. A few young men, educated properly, and sent back to labour without any sectarian end, for the good of their countrymen, and to diffuse among them secular and religious knowledge, might effect much for the East. It is painful, however, to be obliged to observe, that many well-meaning persons have done much mischief to some of the Easterns who have visited this country, by making lions of them, and

Digitized by Google

thus encouraging habits of pride and self conceit which have marred considerably their after usefulness.

A friend of mine once received an invitation to a party, where a Syrian prince was expected to be present. As he was well acquainted with the East he was somewhat surprised at this announcement, and still more so when, on entering the room, he discovered in his Syrian Highness an old retainer who had frequently, in days of yore, polished his shoes and brushed his coat.

Bishop Athanasius, however, had not been spoiled by his visit to our shores. He had a frank, open manner about him which was very pleasing, and he seemed really anxious to promote in every way the welfare of his countrymen. He informed us that the Christians were much oppressed in Diarbekir, as they were obliged to wear dresses of a particular colour, and were forbidden to ride on horseback. We experienced the truth of his remarks as to the disesteem in which Christians were held on our return to our quarters. Three or four Mussulman boys shouted after us "Kafir," and even threw a few stones, but we soon dispersed them by a few strokes from our riding whips.

When we reached home, we found the Italian

Digitized by Google

doctor of the quarantine department waiting for our return. He informed us that a cordon had been drawn round Diarbekir, but that we should no doubt be able to obtain permission to proceed on our way. We did so in fact, and felt at the same time the folly of the whole affair, and the inconveniences of which it was no doubt productive to the poorer people. No one acquainted with Turkey could imagine for an instant that those who possessed money enough to bribe the officials, would not be passed through immediately, even if they came from the most plague-stricken region, while the poor gardener or agriculturist, who depended on the city markets for subsistence, was excluded without mercy.

The doctor seemed very ignorant of medicine, though he professed to have studied it at an Italian university. Half of his brethren however in Turkey, might be numbered under the same category. These Sangrados certainly do as much as in them lies to diminish the number of the Sultan's subjects, in return for the money which they extract from Turkish pockets. With regard to the latter particular, however, our medical acquaintance complained that he rarely got his fees, as his patients, though profuse in promises when they were sick, forgot them as soon as they became convalescent.

Digitized by Google

An Armenian dragoman who accompanied the doctor, was exceedingly anxious to enter my service, as he complained that he could not get any pay from his present employer.

"Do you also practise physic?" I inquired.

"Sometimes, signore," replied this Oriental Gil Blas. "I have picked up some knowledge of medical treatment from my master's books, and from his performances. I seldom meddle, indeed, with the signori, as that would be improper, and a rivalry with my most illustrious master; but I attend to the peasants and the humbler classes, who, poor people, are very grateful, and reward my services with rice fruit, and sometimes a fowl."

"Do your patients ever die?" I inquired.

"But seldom, signore," replied the fellow, with a grin; "and, when they do, I assure you it is no fault of mine. I follow strictly the prescribed rules of the profession. Eccollo! here is my lancet!" drawing forth a rusty old blade, which might have pricked the veins of Methusaleh. "With this I have saved many lives. Your Excellency seems of a full habit, would you make proof of my skill?"

"Grazia, no," I replied; "I never call in a medico except when obliged, and at present I do not require your assistance. But what else can you do?"

Digitized by Google

"What can I not do?" he answered. "I can speak eight languages and write six. I can ride, attend to a horse, cook a dinner, and make European clothes. I am a most discreet person and never betray secrets. I eat and sleep little, and never require much pay."

"Verily you are an universal genius," I said, "but at present I have no occasion for such a treasure. Here are a few piastres to assist your medical studies."

The doctor rose to take leave, and his worthy assistant, with many bows and expressions of gratitude, speedily followed in his train.

In the afternoon we went to pay our respects to the Pasha, whom we found in an apartment of the citadel, which seemed to be used as an armoury. His Excellency was an Albanian by birth, and had risen from the ranks to his present station. He was very polite and obliging, making no difficulty whatever respecting our proposed infringement of the quarantine laws. The pipes brought us were very superbly mounted, and were about six feet in length. On leaving the Pasha, we rambled through the gardens of the Serai, which were tastefully laid out, and overlooked the Tigris. On the opposite bank were several coffee houses surrounded by gardens, under

Digitized by Google

the trees of which we discerned several parties making Kaif, while the strains of music issued from different parts. From the top of the citadel we had a good view of the town, and counted the minarets of eleven mosques, besides the domes of innumerable mesjids or chapels.

As we proceeded through the streets, we noticed several of the remains of the ancient Amida, some of which had been inserted in the walls of the modern houses. Here and there, the capital of a Dori column was used as a horse block, while a tablet, with a Greek inscription half erased, made its appearance under the sill of a modern Turkish window.

We visited a large building, or rather the remains of one, which still retains the name of Djameh El Kabeer, the great mosque, and was probably the cathedral of Christian Amida. The eastern and western walls were still in a tolerable state of preservation, while those to the north and south had been disfigured by Saracenic additions. The eastern wall had a large arched recess in the centre, which had probably formed originally the apse behind the altar where the bishop and his clergy usually sat. The northern wall was covered with Arabic inscriptions, and joined on to a mosque. The area

Digitized by Google

of the Djameh was used as a market, and was covered with stalls. At the door of the mosque we perceived the corpse of a man lying on a species of bier, upon whose breast was a wooden platter filled with the alms of the charitable passers by, who contributed in this manner to the expenses of the funeral.

When we returned home, we found the Chaldean bishop, who spoke of some Latin and Greek inscriptions, which he advised us to see. He mentioned also several Greek or Genoese ruins among the hills in the vicinity. In the evening, our host, Khowajeh Bidoush came and sat with us; and, being a Papal Chaldean, entered into a long argument with B— respecting the supremacy of Rome, and the meaning of the text, "Thou art Peter." The Khowajeh contended strongly for the literal meaning, while B— quoted the Fathers, and endeavoured to prove that they had given quite a different interpretation. To my surprise, our Chaldean friend repudiated the Fathers, talked loudly and long of the right of private judgment, and protested that he built his religion on the declarations of Scripture solely. The dispute struck me very much, as it displayed an anti Romanist opposed in his turn by the "Bible-alone-principle;" though those who are so very

Digitized by Google

strenuous for it might have differed considerably from the conclusion arrived at by Khowajeh Bidoush. The right of private judgment, as it is understood by some writers in England, reminds one very much of Warburton's definition of orthodoxy,* it implies your own right to put what meaning you like on any passage of Scripture, and the erroneous impertinence of those who contradict you.

The next morning we were obliged to make our peregrinations in the rain, and our umbrellas somewhat astonished the small fry of Diarbekir. We found a pool near the walls filled with holy fish, though I am not aware of the origin of their sanctity. They looked fat and comfortable, however, and were by no means timid, coming frequently to the surface of the pool to look at us, and to receive the morsels of bread which we threw in from time to time. They had indeed no cause for fear, as it was expressly forbidden, under severe penalties, to catch any of them, while the supplying them with food was regarded as highly meritorious.

We went round to the gates, where we found several Latin and Greek inscriptions, parts of which

* "Orthodoxy," said that learned prelate, "is my doxy; hetero doxy, another man's."

Digitized by Google

were however illegible. One of these recorded the virtues of the Emperors Valentinian, Valens, and Gratian, and their benefits conferred on the town. There were also several Kufic inscriptions, with several emblematical figures carved in bas-relief over the gates.

There are four gates to Diarbekir, Bab Mardin, Bab edj Djebal, Bab edj Djedeed, and Bab er Room, nearly all of which, together with the black walls, seem to owe their existence to the Romans, or rather the Greeks of the Lower Empire. We strolled along the ramparts, and were much pleased by the view, and the appearance of a very picturesque rock and waterfall between the fortifications and the river.

As we were stopping outside the different gates to read the inscriptions, and to sketch the bas-reliefs which appeared upon them, we were frequently surrounded by crowds of idlers, who viewed our proceedings evidently with a mixture of curiosity and distrust. Whispered rumours as to our object began to be disseminated by two or three who assumed the air of being wiser than their fellows. "Those Franks are taking surveys of the country, and of the strong places, in order that their countrymen should know where to make their attacks," said one. "No such thing," observed another, "you know nothing about it

Digitized by Google

my friend. These people are cunning magicians, and have dealings with the Djin. I saw one of their countrymen once take out a piece of paper, over which he held a small glass for a minute or so, and, on my head, the whole was consumed to ashes. They are drawing our city on their papers, which, when they get home they will burn by means of these magic glasses, and the effect will be that our city will gradually fall to ruins." "No, no, my soul," remarked another, "this is too much. That people work in magic, and have dealings with the Djin is probable, but, Stoffer Allah*, to suppose that a man can burn paper with a glass, Kithub it is a lie." The narrator had now to defend his own veracity, and this tended a little to distract public attention from our movements, a diversion for which we were not unthankful.

Returning home, we found the doctor and his faithful attendant, who again endeavoured to fasten himself upon me, even in the presence of his master. The latter seemed not indisposed to get rid of him, and, therefore, gave him a most excellent character, to which, however, I attached small credence. While we were talking, some one entered the room, and a voice

* "May God forbid!" an exclamation indicative of astonishment or horror.

Digitized by Google

said to B—— in English, "How do you do?" I looked up, and saw a good-looking young man of about five and twenty, who was dressed in the usual Turkish official costume, and announced himself as Ameen Effendi. He sat down on the sofa, and informed us that he had resided for seven years in England, and had received his education in the London University; which he spoke of with great affection and admiration. He had also visited Paris, which he preferred to our own metropolis in point of elegance and gaiety. It was strange to hear a native of old Amida discoursing of modern scenes and cities in such a secluded place as this, nor did I think that his travels had improved Ameen Effendi. The doctor had taken his leave after he came in, but not before the Graduate of Gower Street, had pronounced a somewhat contemptuous opinion of his capabilities.

The next day we bade adieu to our hospitable host, Khowajeh Bidoush, who had treated us with the greatest kindness, though no doubt he looked upon us as sad heretics. As we rode through the streets, a few urchins hooted at the astounding spectacle of Christians on horseback, but they scampered off in great haste when they had received a few lessons of toleration from the lash of Giorgio's riding whip.

Digitized by Google

This excepted, we met with no annoyance or inconvenience in our ride to the gates; having passed which, we took a last farewell of Amida the black.

Fifteen miles from Diarbekir we found a small Kurdish encampment, where we halted for the night. The tents were very large, and frequently divided into four or five compartments by means of screens manufactured with twigs, or in some instances by a low wall of loose stones. Within these Nomadic dwellings, men and women sat together on pieces of felt or hair-cloth, which formed rather hard diwans.

From the encampment, we rode on four hours to Kara Bagheeh, a small collection of huts, which were nearly all deserted by their former inhabitants. On asking the reason from the few survivors, who still lingered in the place of their birth, we were answered in one emphatic word "Thulm.*" During our ride we had the Taurus at our back and to the right of the road. The heights were covered with snow, while around the most towering summits, light hazy clouds floated, now hiding from view the crest of the mountain, and now as it were dissolving themselves, and presenting the appearance of waves in an aërial ocean.

Two hours' ride from Kara Bagheeh, brought us to

* Oppression.

Digitized by Google

Kai Mari, a small mound, at the base of which was flowing a small rivulet, around which were grouped the different members of our caravan, that had started from Diarbekir before us. As they were sitting down to their evening meal, I could not help thinking that Oriental notions of liberty and equality were more truly practical than our own. The master and his servant sat down together on the grass to partake of the pillaw which the latter had cooked, while a black negro, whose society would have been universally shunned in the free and enlightened country of America, was here in despotic Turkey seated next to a free white merchant of Mosul. The black was indeed a slave, and had always been one from his earliest boyhood, but he had been treated by his owner like a member of the family, and was now filling a post similar to that of a confidential clerk. He had been despatched to Aleppo on a family mission of some delicacy regarding his master's younger brother, over whom for the time being he was to exercise full authority. Our sable friend was well mounted on a fine stout hack, his dress was of good materials, nor did he seem a whit inferior to any one in the caravan.

A citizen of the American slave states, would be astonished, if not scandalized to hear that the Turkish

Digitized by Google

bondman, be he black or white, possesses frequently greater facilities for rising in the world than those enjoyed by his free neighbour. He may become the friend, the counsellor, and confidant of his master, and sometimes ends by being appointed his heir. The white slaves not unfrequently obtain their freedom, and a wife from their master's family, though I have never heard that the latter has ever been the case with with the blacks. Still the latter enjoy great personal freedom, are treated with kindness, and often amass property in their state of servitude. The master of the household is not, all things considered, more rigourous to his slave than towards his own sons. The latter are obliged equally to wait upon the family, to perform domestic tasks, and may not without permission sit in their father's presence. When they do amiss, their chastisement is rarely lighter than that inflicted on the slave. In short, if we could admit that the loss of personal freedom can be compensated by comfort and ease, we might consider the bondman of a wealthy Turkish merchant, or of an opulent Bey, as occupying a station more likely to be productive of happiness than that of the free peasant or labourer, who is robbed of his just gains by the tyrannical exactions of an avaricious Mutsellim or a grasping Pasha.

Digitized by Google

From Kai Mari we proceeded to Severek, leaving behind us our companions of the caravan, who journeyed more at their leisure. Perhaps nothing can be more wearying, in Eastern travelling, than marching with one of these assemblages. Your utmost speed is three miles an hour, frequently less, and the monotonous walk of your dull post-horse, broken now and then by a stumble, or by unwonted exertions to scramble over some fragments of rock which lie directly in the centre of your path, is by no means qualified to make the long hours pass pleasantly away. Wistfully and longingly the wearied and impatient traveller eyes the green plains at his side, and thinks how willingly he would take a gallop over them, even at the risk of missing the road or falling among thieves—two suppositions not very improbable in these parts.

But nothing can exceed the solid gravity with which a true Oriental supports these inconveniences. He sits in his high-peaked saddle just as he would sit on his diwan at home, and his solace—the never-failing pipe—accompanies him in a round leathern case which hangs by his water-bottle near the pommel of his saddle. If the way is dreary, he yawns, and after two or three exclamations of Yallah, he draws from his girdle a match, if he be so fortunate as to

Digitized by Google

possess that luxury, and having filled his chibouque from the embroidered pouch which he carries in the bosom of his gown, he lights the tobacco, and then inhaling the smoke, not hurriedly, but in a measured and dignified manner, he thinks of the prophets and saints who have traversed the same weary route before him.

"Do you not find travelling in this manner very troublesome?" I enquired of a young merchant from Mosul, who accompanied us.

"It is fatiguing," he replied, "but praise be to God I have my pipe, and the recollection that our Father Ibraheem, on whom be peace and rest, passed over these very plains in old days, and surely it is a great honour for an unworthy sinner like me to tread in the steps of so great a man."

Our journey to Severek occupied seven hours and a half, over a road filled with bogs and quagmires. The constant recurrence of these in Eastern travel, probably suggested some of the finest passages in the Psalms, where a comparison is frequently instituted between them and the troubles of life. Nothing can be more specious, or more safe, apparently, than the nature of the ground before you. You ride forward in perfect security, when suddenly you are half blinded by two or three jets of mud, and find yourself flounder-

Digitized by Google

ing in the midst of a morass, sinking deeper and deeper at every plunge.

The town of Severek is situated about thirty-six miles south of the Taurus, between Diarbekir and the Euphrates. It contains a population of 700 families, of whom 120 are Armenians, five or six Jews, and the rest Mohammedans. There is a mound in the centre of the town, on which we found the ruins of an ancient citadel. The bazaars were very wretched buildings, but the mosques and baths not unworthy a handsomer town. Around, in the outskirts, we saw several plantations of fruit-trees and vine-yards, which latter belong exclusively to the Christians.

The day after our arrival being Sunday, we read over the morning service in the Armenian Church, which was kindly lent to us for that purpose, the Christians thinking, most likely, that it was better we should pray in our own way than not at all, a sentiment which some of their more civilized brethren would find some difficulty in agreeing to.

We went on from this place to Dashlik, a few huts placed at the foot of a mound, on the summit of which we found an ancient tomb without any inscription, but probably belonging to the period of the Lower Empire. The mountains of the Taurus were still

Digitized by Google

discernible in the distance; and frequently when, amid the quagmires and morasses of the road, I looked upon their summits, lit up with the glories of a mid-day sun, I could not help being reminded of the hopeful confidence of a good man, who raises his thoughts from the troubles and calamities of life to those eternal regions of the blessed, where the wandering and the weary shall be at peace for ever.

Eight hours' ride from Severek brought us to a small village called Kara Djourma, where we found some families of Yezidees living in black tents. An altercation here ensued with the soldiers of our escort, who had accompanied us from Severek, and who were very anxious to persuade us to go on to Urfah by a longer and a more circuitous route than we had originally intended. By-and-bye, however, the truth came out. Sufook, the celebrated chieftain of the Shammar tribe, was in the vicinity, and some of his Arabs having been plundered by the Governor of Severek, he had sworn that he would plunder every caravan that passed that way. This was rather unpleasant news, particularly as Sufook was noted on such occasions, for keeping his word to the very letter, and, having separated from our companions, we had only the courage of our guards to trust to, which was

Digitized by Google

rather a questionable ground of confidence. We deemed it wiser, therefore, to put in practice the better part of valour, and incur the inconvenience of a lengthened route, rather than that of being stripped to the skin and compelled to walk barefooted to the next village; so we followed the advice of Giorgio, who had formerly had a rencontre with St. Nicholas' clerks, which he related to me in nearly the following terms:—

"On one occasion, I was despatched by the English Consul at Mosul to bring a large sum from Baghdad to the latter place. I had also some money of my own to receive, so I armed myself, and went down the Tigris on a raft, hoping in less than a fortnight to have accomplished my business and to have returned. When I arrived at Baghdad, I found that the Consul's money had been forwarded to him, but my own was waiting for me, and I took it and departed in peace. There was some talk of the Kurds or Arabs being about the road, and many advised me to wait for a caravan, but I thought all these tales are invented by the cowardice of the Easterns, and it would ill become me, who am a Greek, to listen to them. So I took with me a Turkish soldier, my gun, and a sabre, and departed. I had disposed of my

Digitized by Google

money in the belt which I wore, and did not doubt that I should be able to escape both the Kurds and Arabs.

"For a day and a half we pursued our journey in safety, though my companion was very fearful, and was always telling me of the caravans that had been stopped near this place, and of the men who had lost their lives. But I bade him hold his tongue, and informed him that a Greek does not fear all the Kurds and Arabs in the world, seeing that they are all senseless animals, and barbarians who have no manners. But while I was telling him this, he uttered an exclamation and said, 'Oh, the Merciful One, the Kurds are upon us.' Then he spurred his horse forward, and fled.

"I looked round and perceived three fellows on horseback with long spears, who were galloping after me, and who seemed to have no other companions with them. Then I thought surely it is a shame to fly before these three, so I waited till they came up, when, in answer to their summons to deliver up my money, I fired my gun at the foremost, and laid him rolling on the sand. The other two then uttered a shrill scream, when Panagia! there came from behind one of the mounds a whole troop of these savages with their long spears, who, when they saw their

Digitized by Google

comrade down, made at me with the most determined fury. Now, I am a poor weak man, and not like my countryman Achilles, who, they say, encountered a host with his single arm, so I turned my horse's head, and followed the Turk as hard as I could gallop. But my hired hack was no match for the steeds of the robbers, who soon came up with me and pierced my back with three spears at once, whereupon I fell to the ground bleeding and motionless.

"They thought I was dead, and immediately began to strip me. They took every article of clothing, and when I became sensible, I found myself lying on the sand, with only a shirt on, and three or four wounds, the smarting of which caused me intolerable pain. My horse was gone; wherefore, after having bound up my wounds in the best way I could, I managed to walk to the next village, about ten miles, with a burning sun beating fiercely on my head and blistering my skin. I fainted several times before I got to the village, and had I been an Eastern, my bones might, to this day, have been bleaching in that sandy plain; but, praise be to God, I am a Greek; and so I overcame all these difficulties, and reached the village in safety, where they treated me with great kindness (for they were Christians) and tended my wounds. When I recovered, I contrived to hire a horse and return to

Digitized by Google

Mosul, where I found the money from Baghdad had arrived safely."

By the time Giorgio had finished his story, we came to a scene which recalled the ancient days of patriarchal simplicity. In an undulating plain, surrounded by low downs, we saw several hundreds of sheep and goats feeding quietly, and extending themselves far and wide over the verdant area. In one part, a small flock of them were following their shepherd to a more promising piece of pasturage; he walked before them, and carried, in the bosom of his gown, a favourite young lamb. Through the green meadows, flowed a small rivulet, to whose pure rippling stream a few goats or sheep wandered occasionally to quench their thirst. The chief shepherd, or master of the flock, was a venerable man, with a long silvery beard, which descended as far as the girdle, reminding me forcibly of Abraham, or of one of the Patriarchs.

Nothing could be more agreeable than our journey over these downs. The air blew cool and fresh from the distant mountains of the Taurus; the aspect of the country around was diversified by trees and shrubs, watered by small rivulets, which seemed to flow in the direction of the Euphrates. The sound of the sheep bells, and the bleating of the flocks alone broke the silence of the wilderness, and relieved the tediousness

Digitized by Google

of solitude. Pitching our tent on the borders of one of the rivulets, we passed a comfortable evening; and when night drew on, the serenity of the weather so far tempted me, that I had my coverlet spread outside in the open air, where I gazed for some time on the cloudless Mesopotamian sky and the brilliant stars, and then fell asleep.

The next morning, we were on horseback at 3 A.M., and pursued our way over the downs to Kara Kupri, which we reached about 8 A.M. It was surrounded by trees, on several of which we perceived rags and strips of cloth and ribbon attached to the branches. These we were informed, were votive offerings, made chiefly by the female peasantry, for the safety of some relative or friend who had gone a journey. An hour after leaving Kara Kupri, we came in sight of Urfah.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XIII.

Urfah. Mochdesseh Yeshua. A Bedouin. Syrian Observances. Church of St. Thaddeus. Bir. Passage of the Euphrates. Aleppo. English Merchants. An Austrian Consul.

The city of Urfah is built at the foot of a low range of chalk hills, part of the town being situated on the rising ground. It presents a very beautiful appearance from a distance, being almost embosomed in trees. Nor does the interior so much disappoint the eye, as that of most Eastern towns; the streets are clean, and well supplied with water, as the city possesses numerous springs.

We took up our quarters at the house of a respectable Syrian, whose name was Yeshua, or Joshua, to which was added the honorific of Mochdesseh, or pil-

Digitized by Google

grim, a term used among the Christians, as equivalent to the Mohammedan word Hadjee, which is applied to one who has visited Mecca. The appellation of Mochdesseh is given, in like manner, to a person who has made the Eastern pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The worthy Mochdesseh, however, scarcely answered to the usual romantic conception and description of a Palmer from the Holy Land. He was a stout, sleepy-looking Syrian merchant, with very matter-of-fact habits and manners. He treated us, however, with great kindness and civility, though his demeanour to others, was that of a man who knows he has money in his pocket.

In the house of Mochdesseh Yeshua, several married sons had taken up their abode with their wives. Although, according to Eastern opinions, settled in life, and emancipated from the shackles of youthful obedience, their behaviour to their father presented a striking and agreeable contrast to the conduct of young men, of their own age, in more civilised countries. The old fashioned notions of the Orientals do not tolerate that familiarity which every stripling, scarcely out of his teens, would think himself justified in using towards his parent in this our enlightened and educated land. An Eastern father would deem the correction of the rod needed by some of those lingerers between

Digitized by Google

boyhood and manhood, whose shrill piping tone, and nauseous affectation of manly airs, renders their society so disagreeable to people of mature age.

The houses of Urfah are built of white stone, which materially improves their appearance, and they abound with windows; so that, a walk through one of the streets, does not, as in Mosul, present the eye with an interminable series of dead walls. Gardens abound in every direction, and the sides of the hills, in the vicinity, are covered with vineyards, owned by Christians, who make, of the produce, wine of most excellent quality. The town contains fifteen Mosques, several Christian churches, and about forty thousand inhabitants, of which, twenty thousand are Christians. The latter are made to pay all the taxes, as well their own as those of their Mohammedan fellow citizens, and are subject to great insult and oppression.

A son of Mochdesseh Yeshua, informed me, that there were originally in the town, a body of Moslem, whose functions seemed to have resembled those of our militia, and who called themselves Yen-cheri, or Janizaries. When, however, the Constantinople Yen-cheri were broken up, these gentlemen deemed it prudent to retire into the obscurity of private life, from which, however, they, now and then emerged, in order to worry and annoy the Christians. An unfor-

Digitized by Google

tunate Syrian had been visited by them a few days before our arrival; they demanded spirits, and on his refusal to supply them, broke every thing in his house. He appealed to the Pasha, but in vain; the Yen-cheri were too powerful to be interfered with, and the poor Christian was obliged to sacrifice a large sum, in order to get rid of his tormentors. There are also in Urfah, thirty families of Jews, who have two synagogues, and share in the persecution which the Christians suffer from the Mohammedans. Here, as elsewhere, however, the poor Jews are treated worse than the Christians.

Soon after our arrival, we received visits from a Greek doctor, an Armenian banker, and a Syrian priest. The Greek had come all the way from Athens to explain practically the mysteries of Hippocrates to the Syrians of ancient Edessa, nor did he at all lament the lot which had fixed him in the midst of barbarians. He was well spoken of in the town, although he had a Frank practitioner to contend with, who was often admitted to the honour of feeling the Pasha's pulse. The latter gentleman had not recommended civilization by his moral conduct, being, in fact, one of those numerous harpies who are so often found preying on the corpse of unfortunate Turkey. The Sultan would confer a great public benefit to his

Digitized by Google

subjects could he send these gentry back again to their respective countries, to which, however, their return would be anything but welcome.

The Armenian was fat, pursy, and important: a species of Christian Hebrew, with a good humoured, though somewhat dull countenance. The Syrian priest had been sent on a mission from his bishop to invite us to visit their church and schools. Besides these, a visitor of a novel description came to pay his respects to us. He was a Bedouin Arab from the encampment of Sufook, and brought an invitation from that chieftain to B—, who returned an answer that he would visit the head of the Shammar the next day at Haran. The demeanour of this rugged son of the desert was as free and independent as though he had been Pasha of Urfah and all its dependencies. He looked complacently on his bare feet, and pitied us for being obliged to submit to the slavery of wearing shoes and stockings.

"Who," he exclaimed, "is more truly free than the Arab, that has nothing to care for save his children and his mares. Free from the oppression and the vices of the town, his tent requires no thought, for in a few minutes it is pitched, and in a short time it is removed. The dweller in cities is bound to one spot, for he cannot carry his house with him, but the

Digitized by Google

Bedouin is to-day on the banks of the Euphrates, and to-morrow beyond the Tigris. The Bedouin has no wants, he requires only a little rice and his haick. Whose steeds are like those of the Arab! They fly like the wind, and the lightning passes not with greater rapidity from one end of heaven to the other than the mare of the Bedouin."

When this encomiast of a savage life had taken his departure, we went forth to see the town. One of the most striking of the public buildings was the mosque of Ibraheem (the Patriarch Abraham), surnamed El Khalil, the friend or companion of God. The Syrian writers all agree in considering Urfah the ancient Ur of the Chaldees, nor does the supposition seem improbable. I have already mentioned my reasons for supposing that the Chaldean race occupied at first the northern parts of Mesopotamia. The only argument against this hypothesis seems to be the position of Haran, which lies south-east of Urfah, and would seem, therefore, to be out of the Aleppo route. Yet the language of Scripture does not necessarily infer that Abraham proceeded thither on his way to Palestine, as he appears to have remained at Haran a considerable time. The hypothesis which places Ur in Susiana seems, however, utterly untenable, and is founded only on the assumption that Babel, the metro-

Digitized by Google

polis of Nimrod, was in the province afterwards called Chaldea near the modern Baghdad. The ancient traditions all mention that Abraham was put into a furnace of fire at Ur, by the command of the tyrannical Nimrod. If, however, the latter was the sovereign of Northern Mesopotamia, there is nothing in that fact to render the identification of Urfah with Ur disputable. It is remarkable that a small eminence not far from this town still bears the appellation of Nimrod Tagh, or the mountain of Nimrod.

The mosque of Ibraheem el Khalil is delightfully situated in the midst of a plantation of trees, among which we discerned also a fine tank filled with large fish, who are regarded with great veneration, and are fed daily by a person appointed for that purpose. Near the tank were several stalls, where bread and cakes were sold to those who were desirous of fulfilling the meritorious task of supplying the necessities of the finny tribe. The fish seemed very happy and contented, and doubtless found the reputation of sanctity very convenient in many ways. I did not quarrel with the Moslem for their care of the fish, though I told some of them that attention to the wants of their poor fellow men would be in my estimation a better action; an opinion which did not excite much ap-

Digitized by Google

proval, and doubtless caused me to be regarded as a sceptical and heretical sort of person.

Near the mosque was a fine old tower which had formerly been part of a Christian church, when Edessa was famous for its academical reputation. I spent the day in rambling about, and in musing over ancient walls and remains that encountered me at every step. In the course of my walk, I proceeded through a very picturesque cemetery, up the side of the hill on which the citadel, a mere modern building, is constructed. Within the walls of the latter were two Corinthian pillars, which seemed anciently to have been surmounted by statues. Near the top of one, we were told, was a Chaldean inscription. On the side of another hill in the vicinity I observed several sepulchral grots and excavations, with some arches of Greek or Roman construction. Near the citadel was another reservoir of sacred fish.

We then proceeded to the Armenian church, an old building situated in the midst of a cemetery. It was filled with tawdry pictures of the day of judgment, in which, as elsewhere, devils with horns, long tails, and three-pronged forks, figured very conspicuously. Among the paintings, however, was one of superior execution, representing the Blessed Virgin

Digitized by Google

and the infant Saviour, which I was told had been executed by St. Thaddeus. From the Armenian church, we repaired to the house of the Syrian bishop, who received us with great kindness. He mentioned that his community had succeeded in obtaining permission to erect a new church outside the ramparts of the city, which was rather an innovation on Moslem law and practice. We then went to inspect the Syrian schools, which we found in excellent condition, though they complained sadly of want of books, a frequent want in a country where there are scarcely any printing presses, and where the labour and expense of transcription forbids the multiplication of copies of even the most elementary works.

From the Syrian church, we repaired to the Serai in order to wait upon the Pasha, a most inane looking personage with two projecting teeth like the tusks of a wild boar. His Excellency asked whether England was contiguous to India, and whether we intended returning home by land.

The next day I felt too unwell to accompany B—, who repaired, according to agreement, to pay the promised visit to Sufook. He took with him a tinselled dress as an offering to the Arab chief, who, in return for this civility, presented him with a fine young Arab horse. B— then visited Haran, of

Digitized by Google

which he reported that a few old walls were the only remains. Giorgio had also his tale to tell, for, having in a fit of curiosity mounted a camel, the beast set off with him *nolens volens* into the desert, and was stopped with great difficulty.

The next day being Sunday, and the Feast of Pentecost, or Whit Sunday, I accompanied our host and his son to the Syrian church. It was handsomely decorated for the occasion, and, as the service commenced before daybreak, the silver lamps were all lighted, which produced a fine effect, and corresponded well with the rich robes of the bishop and numerous officiating priests and deacons. Before prayers began, the clergy marched in procession round the church, sprinkling the congregation with boughs dipped in water, which ceremony they repeated three times. Some prayers and lessons followed, after which the bishop and priests lay down before the altar, in the attitude of persons about to sleep. All of a sudden they started up, and began tapping each other on the back. While I was marvelling what this could mean, all the congregation imitated their example, upon which I turned round, and asked my companion the reason. He whispered that on the morning of Whit Sunday the Apostles, having waited all night for the descent of the Holy Ghost, became towards morning

Digitized by Google

very drowsy, and adopted this means of keeping one another awake. This practice, he added, was in commemoration of it.

After the tapping was over, the service proceeded as usual, and on its termination, I went to pay the compliments of the feast to the bishop and his priests, who were good enough to invite me to breakfast.

On Monday morning, B—— and I resumed our peregrinations, and visited a celebrated well, about half an hour's walk from the town, which was called Beer Aiyoub, the well of Job. In this well, it is said, was thrown the miraculous picture which our Saviour sent to King Agbarus. We descended eight steps into a subterranean cave, where we were told Job resided during his affliction. From the well of Job we repaired to the Armenian Church of SS. Thaddeus and Ephraim Syrus. The church itself contained little worthy of notice, though the date of its erection was the third century. We descended nine steps into a stone crypt beneath, where we were shown the tombs of the two saints, with some other monuments.

After some conversation with the Armenian clergy, we visited the ancient quarries, which seemed to have been very extensive, and abounded with sepulchral

Digitized by Google

excavations. Near at hand was a building called the Ziarah of Sheikh Makhoud, which our guides very much wished us to see. Being, however, unable to make any one hear, one of the Khawasses with us adopted the novel expedient of firing his pistol into the keyhole. The attempt, however, did not succeed, and we were doomed to be disappointed of the promised sight.

From hence we walked round the gardens, enjoying their fresh and verdant appearance. We entered into conversation with an old Syrian, who offered us some fruit, and invited us to sit and rest ourselves under his trees. After a brief pause, we went on to the Piaret Suleiman, a pool inclosed by walls, in which the legend relates that St. Thaddeus baptized the King of Edessa. Bottles of this water are sent throughout all parts of the surrounding country, and are considered a certain specific against disease. The spring abounds in fish, which no person is allowed to touch.

In our way home, we passed along the banks of the Kara Kiouy, a small rivulet flowing through two high banks, connected by several bridges, nearly the whole of which had been newly erected. Following the course of the stream, we returned to the town, and passed an almost endless succession of orchards and gardens. The environs of Urfah present some of the most

Digitized by Google

pleasing views in this part of Mesopotamia, and remind the traveller that he is already on the verge of that land of the plain and shrub.

When we reached home, we found one of the Christian inhabitants of the town, who had come in great affliction to ask the advice of our host under the following circumstances. His son, a boy of thirteen, had been sent out with a few piastres to bring something from the bazaar. As he was going thither, he encountered a troop of playfellows, who engaged him in some interesting game, which so engrossed his attention, that he lost the money which his father had given him. Not knowing what excuse to make, and dreading the chastisement of his angry parents, he stood crying at the corner of the street. A Mohammedan, who was passing by, inquired the cause, and having heard the boy's story, induced him to come to his house, promising to repair his loss. The child followed his new friend, and in the evening a message came to the almost distracted father that his son had embraced Islam, and that he would see him no more. The terrified parent repaired to the dwelling of the Moslem, but the latter had prevailed upon the boy to refuse to return with his father, and as he had already repeated the profession of faith, he could not, without perilling his life, resume again the name of Christian.

Digitized by Google

Nothing however, could be done in the matter, as the Pasha, though not a bigoted Moslem, feared the violence of the Yen-cheri, and others of the Mohammedan faction, who declared that they would carry off the youth by violence from his father even if he were now restored to him.

The next day we made preparations for our departure from Urfah, but our friends were unwilling that we should proceed without a parting mark of their hospitality. It was arranged that we were to accompany them to the premises connected with the church of Mar Ephraim, where they intended to dine, and make Kaif, and the next morning bid us adieu. After accepting their invitation, we despatched on our baggage under the charge of Giorgio, took a farewell ramble about ancient Edessa, and, at four o'clock, joined our friends near Mar Ephraim.

At sunset we sat down, cross-legged, to an excellent dinner, al fresco, in company with our worthy host, the Greek doctor, and the stout Armenian banker, who seemed to be somewhat of an epicure. Then there were several priests of the Armenian and Syrian communities, and the venerable Armenian bishop, who pronounced a long grace before and after meat.

As the evening drew on, the scene presented many attractions to the eye of one who, like myself, is fond of

Digitized by Google

strange groups and curious combinations. A lover of the romantic would have remarked with pleasure the mild and chastened light which the rising moon cast on the fantastic arches, and irregular, though striking buildings connected with the old church of St. Ephraim, above which appeared the summit of the Acropolis, with its two lone columns, that had witnessed so many stirring spectacles. Beyond was the town, with its masses of foliage, and the graceful dome of the Mosque of Ibraheem, recalling the memory of the patriarch pilgrim, who left the city of his fathers to wander he knew not whither. On the side the eye caught a glimpse of the low building which surrounded the pool where the first Christian monarch of Edessa received his initiation into that faith to which his descendants so faithfully adhered. It seemed almost a vision that flitted before the fancy when I strove to realize the fact, that I was treading ground made memorable by such recollections, and surrounded by the living posterity of that old Chaldean race.

Nor should the latter be entirely passed over while I endeavour to recall the circumstances which attended my farewell to a place so remarkable. The worthy Mochdesseh presses his good cheer upon us with all the fervour of Eastern hospitality till the tables are

Digitized by Google

removed, and we sit in all the luxury of the dolce far niente, under the shade of the trees, inhaling the chibouque or narguileh, and drinking the juice of the genuine mocha berry from cups no larger than those usually appropriated to eggs in this country. The portly Armenian is expanding under the genial influence of Edessa wine, the Greek is haranguing with all the loquacity of his nation, and the good old bishop, with his venerable beard, smiles gently on our mirth, as if we were all his own spiritual children. By and bye the doctor volunteers the Romaika, and choosing out a plat of grass illumined by the moon's rays, he goes through those ancient evolutions, greatly to the company's satisfaction and his own. A band of wandering minstrels have joined us, and, after a few cups of wine, they give vent to one of those strange nasal Oriental melodies that one is about to pronounce frightful, when some pleasing notes suspend our condemnation, and leave us at a loss to determine whether we like them or not.

At length the revelry is at an end, and the party remain buried in slumber till the first dawn of day summons the attendants to prepare for the march. A few words of farewell, an affectionate blessing from the bishop as we stoop to kiss his hand, and we are in our saddles, taking our last glance at ancient Edessa, and its hospitable sons.

Digitized by Google

After a long and weary ride over low hills, whose white and chalky sides presented an unpleasing contrast to the verdant plantations we had just quitted; we arrived at Charmelik, a village of cone shaped huts, which is inhabited in the winter only by wandering Turcomans. In the spring, and summer, they dwell in tents, and roam through the Mesopotamian plains to seek pasture for their numerous flocks. We took up our quarters in a deserted Khan, opposite to which was a ruined mosque, in the interior of which we found the remains of the pulpit-steps, and the niche to show the direction of Mecca. In the neighbourhood were several cisterns or tanks, excavated in the rocky soil, with steps to enable the drawers of water to descend.

The next day we journeyed eight hours to Bir or Biredjeck on the Euphrates, over low hills of limestone, the reflection from which proved intolerable after the sun had risen. The roads were very good, however, having been recently constructed by Hafiz Pasha, who also excavated a large tank which we passed on our journey. As we halted to take a little rest and refreshment, a man habited like a Derwish approached us. He professed to be a serpent charmer, and drew one of the reptiles from beneath his cloak, which he compelled to go through sundry contortions,

Digitized by Google

and finished by winding it round his neck, like a necklace.

At Bir we passed the night in a plantation, overlooking the river, on the opposite bank of which were the remains of a fort which the officers of the Euphrates Expedition had entitled Fort William, an appellation rather out of place in such a country, where one dislikes nothing so much as to be dragged back from the contemplation of antiquity by the recollection of modern doings. Not that I would, however, in the least degree undervalue the importance of the expedition, or overlook the merits of the gallant officers engaged in it, though one cannot exactly view it in the same light as the Anabasis.

The next morning we crossed the Euphrates in a boat, which was certainly in keeping with the scenery, as it was undoubtedly a model of what had been used two thousand years ago, or more. With all my respect or antiquity, I must, however, admit that our progress was slow, and our vessel leaky, two circumstances which made us rather pleased when landed in safety on the other side.

In seven hours and a half we reaced the banks of the Sajoor, tributary of the Euphrates, where we encamped for the night, and I experienced for the first time the distressing symptoms of fever and ague.

Digitized by Google

Under our present circumstances, however, it was impossible to stop, and I was obliged to be content with the prospect of a speedy arrival at Aleppo.

In the morning we crossed the Sajoor, and pitched our tent at the base of a small mound, near which we observed the ruins of a wall composed of stones, whose dimensions were truly gigantic. I continued very ill, and though Giorgio arranged my coverlet in the best manner he could on the back of the mule, and our pace was exceedingly slow, yet the motion of the animal and the hot scorching rays of a Syrian sun proved almost insupportable. We passed the night near the mound, and the next morning went on to a plantation called Ain Kailan, which we quitted in the afternoon, and soon came in sight of the citadel and minarets of Aleppo, a prospect which then afforded me more pleasure than the finest landscape in the world. It was some time, however, before we reached the city and arrived at the house of Nahum Azar, a Syrian merchant, with whom we were to take up our abode for a few days.

My first impression with regard to Aleppo was the exceeding neatness and cleanliness of the streets, as well as the lively appearance of the people, and the gay exteriors of the houses, so different to the sombre aspect of an Assyrian town. The dwelling of our

Digitized by Google

entertainer was pleasantly situated, and in the centre of the well-paved court we were pleased to notice a marble fountain, whose refreshing streams relieved the heat of mid-day. The houses of Aleppo were well built, and their arrangements displayed a higher and more refined taste than those of the towns we had left.

This city may almost be considered to have succeeded to Antioch as the capital of northern Syria, and possesses probably as much commerce as any large town of Asiatic Turkey. The Bazaars almost reminded me of Constantinople, and the splendid and varied costumes recalled the scenes which had so powerfully impressed me at Smyrna. The inhabitants both male and female of Aleppo are a handsome race, if I might judge from those whom I saw abroad. Both natives and sojourners, however, are subject to a species of disease called the Aleppo button, the effects of which are said to be very disfiguring.

Aleppo possesses a fine citadel, situated on an eminence in the midst of the town. In it are preserved several arrows, bows, and other warlike instruments, said to be as old as the Crusades. The prospect from the ramparts was magnificent: the eye ranged far and wide to the East, over the fertile plains which intervene between the Euphrates and the capital of north-

Digitized by Google

ern Syria, while to the west appeared the dim outlines of Mount Amanus, and the country around Antioch. Like Asia Minor, this part of Syria seems too fair a portion of the earth to remain in the hands of barbarians, whose tyranny and oppression rob the verdant hills and smiling valleys of their charms. Still, the possession of one of the finest climates in the world has probably not been without some grateful influence on the mind of the enslaved Syrian. His spirits are as light and elastic as those of a Greek, and he has learned to dance in his fetters. Perhaps, indeed, he scarcely feels them gall him.

In the days of Maundrell, a large English factory was established in Aleppo, which possessed a monopoly of the trade to the East. This factory and its exclusive privileges has long ago disappeared, but a few English merchants still continue to carry on their commerce here. Times, however, are much changed since Maundrell resided at Aleppo as the representative of the English Church, and praised the diligence of his countrymen in attending daily on divine worship. The English residents are now left without chapel or chaplain, and scarcely ever have an opportunity of enjoying the public ordinances of religion.

It seems strange when we reflect that the English, who pride themselves upon being one of the most

Digitized by Google

pious nations in the world, should be infinitely behind every other in providing for the spiritual wants of those of their countrymen who reside abroad. One can scarcely find two Oriental families anywhere without a priest and a church; the Romanist has his chapels and clergy in every inhabited spot, and even Mohammedans and Pagans rarely live long in any foreign land without raising a mosque or a temple for the services of religion. But when the English do provide such accommodations, they are generally of the meanest and most inexpensive description. Some garret or some cheap apartment on the second floor, situated, as a matter of course, in the filthiest and most remote corner of the town, is generally pointed out as the English chapel. Nor is it surprizing that, under these circumstances, the natives of Great Britain should gain the credit of having no religion. The Italian friar, the Greek or Syrian priest who resides at Aleppo, sees a large body of our countrymen living without a church, a clergyman, or any outward manifestation of their religious faith, and he immediately comes to the same conclusion that every other reasoning being would, namely, that the Ingleez are fermasoon or infidels.

Nor has this been the impression of foreign Christians only, it has been shared by Mohammedans

Digitized by Google

and Pagans. I have heard both in different parts of the world, give our countrymen this character. Now, while these things are so, it would be surely better to alter and amend them, than to indulge in the national cant about being misrepresented and calumniated. Are we to give men, two or three thousand miles off, whose ideas of our island are confused and contradictory, credit for knowing what passes in England; and expect that they shall understand all about our religious and charitable societies? Their estimate of us must, and will be, formed by the conduct of the persons who come out from us, and this we cannot prevent.

It is somewhat ridiculous to hear a sensible man like Mr. Layard, accusing the Romish missionaries of misrepresenting the English character. In the first place, what they say is not misrepresentation according to their opportunities of judging; and secondly, it is, unfortunately, not the Romanists alone who entertain this opinion of us. Let Mr. Layard ask any sensible Mohammedan, any decent Pagan, or any devout Jew his sentiments respecting the English and their religion, and he will obtain the same reply in nearly the same terms. The Romish missionaries may have been guilty of exaggeration, this is probable enough, but I am certain they have too many grounds on which to found their remarks. Surely in the nine-

ASHMOLEAN OXFORD MUSEUM
Digitized by Google

teenth century it is time to discard the wretched Pharisaical cant respecting Englishmen being so much more pious, moral, and religious, than their neighbours.

Besides the merchants of our nation settled at Aleppo, we found commercial men of all countries inhabiting this Syrian mart. One of these gentlemen, a Genovese, informed me that he had been fifteen years in the country, and he seemed proud of being able to add that he knew scarcely three words of the language. He spent his leisure hours—as most of his class do—in talking scandal, smoking cigars, and indulging in that common Italian luxury, the dolce far niente. All these gentry of course despised the natives of the country most intensely, though probably most of them were their inferiors in knowledge and even in education. Every one of the native merchants understood how to write and cypher, and the Franks knew no more.

One day during my stay at Aleppo, I accompanied Khowajeh Mansoor, a young merchant of Mosul, to make some purchases at a Frank warehouse near the citadel. The master of the establishment, a young Hebrew, informed me that he was the representative of the Austrian Government, and gave an amusing account of his mode of keeping up his Consular dignity.

Digitized by Google

"You see, Signore," he remarked, "I am a man of business, as was my father before me, and therefore you must not feel surprised to behold me, at present, habited in a simple jacket and patched pantaloons. On state days, however, I resume the dignity which at present I feel is better laid aside. Could you see me when I visit the Pasha, you would be astonished at the change. I hire four janizaries, who, with a loud voice, clear the way before me for the passage of my mule. They are dressed, for that day only, in laced habiliments, of which I have a great quantity within. I array myself in a magnificent uniform, and all the people salute me as Khowajeh Ibraheem. For the best part of the week, my mother attends to the warehouse, and I occupy myself in my studies. Do you ask what they are? I read Arabic histories and geographies, and study the learned works of the Rabbins. I dabble occasionally in the occult sciences, and am well acquainted with astrology; mathematics are familiar to me, and I have gone several times through the problems of Euclid. I am now learning the Greek language, that I may enjoy the beauties of those incomparable writers who have enlightened the world. In religion I hold liberal opinions, and am, therefore, well disposed towards the English nation. Should you, then, require my services, or feel dis-

Digitized by Google

posed to visit my study, I shall be ravished at the honour of entertaining you."

To this speech I made a suitable reply, and expressed my surprise and delight at encountering, so unexpectedly, a man of so much learning. The Consul then turned to my companion, and after much haggling, sold him a penknife, which the latter found afterwards, was worth about a quarter of the price he had paid for it. He tried also to have dealings with me, and expressed his readiness to cash any orders or bills of exchange, at a moderate rate of interest. I found, however, that all his learning had left him a somewhat keen eye for the main chance, and thought it might be safer to refrain from all pecuniary transactions with a gentleman of such extensive knowledge.

While on a visit to Mr. Wherry, our hospitable Consul, I made acquaintance with his dragoman, M. Michael Sola, who had been, I understood from him, in the employ of Lady Hester Stanhope. He gave me much information respecting that singular person, whose love for Syria and its mysterious associations, are so well known. Her ladyship was, however, very rigid and exacting in her ways; she both loved and exercised power, and on one occasion had M. Sola shut up in prison for some whimsical reason. I asked him if she really possessed much influence with the

Digitized by Google

natives on religious grounds. He replied that they neither understood, nor gave any credence to her pretensions; but many of them found it profitable to carry her strange stories about astrology and magic, and to listen respectfully to the long orations in which she endeavoured to enlighten them.

It is strange how, even after a short residence in the East, the love of that region, its habits, and its mysticism, grows upon the mind. Many instances have come under my notice of persons who, from sojourners, have become residents, and feel little disposed to change their place of abode for a more civilized habitation. Is it an instinctive attraction, an inexplicable longing for the early home of our race, or the influence of early implanted religious feeling that draws us to spots where God has so frequently made Himself visible to man, and the footsteps of prophets and saints have consecrated the very soil?

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XIV.

Journey from Aleppo. Antioch. Latakia. Conclusion.

Not far from Aleppo, is the town of Scanderoon, situated on the gulf of that name. It is the seaport of the former city, from whence merchandize is exported to Europe and other parts, and is frequented by many vessels, though its unhealthiness is such, that few persons can reside there for any length of time with impunity. Near this place, lived an Englishman who had embraced the creed of Islam, and was married to three Syrian ladies, of the same faith. He was said to be an eccentric individual, and had erected a costly tomb over the remains of a favourite dog.

Aleppo seems to be the head quarters of the different Christian churches and sects prevalent in Syria.

Digitized by Google

Maximus, the Papal Patriarch of the Syrians, had his residence here. He received his education at Rome, and was considered a man of some ability. The Greek Melkites have a church at Aleppo, and a very fair congregation. We attended service there one Sunday, and could follow it tolerably, having acquired the Greek mode of pronunciation. Only certain parts of the Liturgy, however, were in the Greek language, as the Melkites use the Arabic in their ministrations. The church was not well fitted up, and, as usual, decorated with tawdry pictures, nor could the chanting be considered agreeable to an European ear. At the end of the Liturgy, certain portions of consecrated bread were handed round, of which we partook. This is a remnant of the ancient Agapai, or love feasts, still retained in the Oriental churches. The Armenians, and Papal Syrians, have two superb places of worship, adorned with silver lamps and some well executed paintings.

On the Monday, a female ballad singer came into the court, and, being known to the family, she sang several songs in Arabic, and made extempore verses on some of the company. She played off two or three practical jokes, which occasioned some amusement, especially when approaching a very pompous individual, she requested permission to kiss his hand;

Digitized by Google

but on his holding it out for that purpose, gave him a sharp bite.

In the course of the afternoon, we paid a visit to a newly married couple, and were introduced to the bride. She was a beautiful young woman, richly dressed, but very childish in her demeanour. Her husband was a wealthy merchant, and possessed a magnificent house, containing some spacious apartments, and several handsome fountains. Nothing can equal the splendour in which the rich Aleppines live, though the city is not without its quota of poor hovels, inhabited by ragged and poverty-stricken natives.

The gardens of Aleppo are famed for their beauty, and the capabilities which they afford for Kaif. We accompanied Nahum Azar to one of these parties, where the usual routine of smoking and story-telling went on for some hours. Two of the company were Melkite Greeks, who had resided some time in Italy. They possessed a tolerable library for the East, consisting chiefly of theological works.

We stayed for some days at Aleppo, to enable me to recover from my fever and ague, which still continued very troublesome. The usual treatment, is to place the patient on a bed, and to heap upon him an innumerable quantity of coverings, which produce perspiration during the shivering stage of this disorder.

Digitized by Google

While I was lying under a mountain of bed clothes, the mother of Nahum Azar brought me a small phial of water, which had been procured from the Holy well at Edessa, and begged me to try it as a remedy. To please the good old lady, I swallowed the whole at a draught, but cannot speak positively as to its effects, as I had previously taken some common medicine, and certainly found myself better on the succeeding day. My recovery was ascribed, however, to the water, by some of the family, though Nahum Azar shook his head suspiciously, and seemed to consider it a doubtful matter.

Having recovered sufficiently to resume my journey, we left Aleppo, on the third of June, for Kefer Dail, a small village, about fifteen miles distant. It was inhabited by Arabs, who afforded us very sorry accommodation. We took up our quarters on a ruined terrace, which had formerly belonged to the mansion of a Bey. From Kefer Dail, we rode on five hours, to Idana, a large village of Arab Musselman. Near the latter place, were some extensive quarries, and excavations with sepulchral grots. We saw also, the remains of a church, consisting of a dome, supported on four columns. To the right of the road, as we passed along, our attention was directed to a solitary mountain, supposed to be that whereon St. Simeon

Digitized by Google

Stylites passed his extraordinary existence. He caused a pillar to be erected here, on the top of which he remained for forty years, preaching sometimes, from his lofty position, to the neighbouring peasants, and giving counsel and admonition even to emperors. The base of his column, we were told, may still be seen on the summit of this mountain. It is strange to reflect on the well-meant perversion of religion, which reduced a sincere believer in the Gospel to the level of a Hindoo Yougee. Simeon, however, doubtless, deemed he was doing God and man service, at the cost of his own comfort and ease. Acting upon such a persuasion, perhaps, his austerities rebuke the selfishness of some of our generation, who think themselves entitled to sneer at him, and who would not suffer the ache of a little finger, either for the sake of God or their fellow man.

The sepulchral caves at Idana, were arched recesses in the rock, about four feet high and three deep, containing each a stone sarcophagus. In the village, we found the ruins of a Greek church, the apse and dome, over the altar, remaining in a fair state of preservation. Columns, architraves, bases, and capitals, were mixed up with reckless confusion, in the exteriors of the village houses. The ruins were resorted to by every one who wished to erect a new habitation, and will

Digitized by Google

probably, soon disappear from their present site. As we were examining these remains, many of the villagers pressed around us, watching, with great curiosity, our researches, and the notes which we wrote down from time to time. When we had ceased from our investigations, they asked if we were looking for gold, and whether there were really any treasures buried below. They seemed to consider our notes as forms of incantation, by which we hoped to subdue, or propitiate, the genii guardians of the hidden riches.

From Idana, we journeyed four hours to Sou Bashi, a marshy place, near a muddy rivulet. As we rode along, we perceived numerous ruins of churches and monasteries, covering the slopes and summits of the hills and mountains on every side. We were now in the vicinity of Antioch, which was celebrated in old times for the number of its monks, whose lauras, or monastic villages, lay scattered about the surrounding country.

Our journey from Sou Bashi, to Jisr Hadeed, or the stone bridge, occupied four hours. This place takes its name from the bridge over the Orontes, which we crossed here. The village itself is on the eastern bank of the river, and contains some relics of antiquity, that have frequently aided in the construction of its mud cabins.

Digitized by Google

From Jisr Hadeed, we rode on for two hours, and spread our carpets, for the night, on the rising acclivities to the south of the road. The scene, at sunset, was magnificent. Before us, were the dark mountains of the Amanus range, skirting an undulating and well-cultivated plain, through the midst of which flowed the Orontes, whose name recalled a multitude of historical associations. Much of the enjoyment, however, which I should otherwise have derived from this part of the journey, was impeded by a return of the fever and ague, that I deemed had been perfectly cured at Aleppo.

From our last halting place we pushed on to Antioch, pursuing our route along the base of the hills, at the foot of which we had rested the night before. At the distance of a mile from the town we encountered a number of gardens, which lay on each side of the road, and seemed to be well tended by their owners. We entered Antioch by the gate of St. Paul, and were much struck by the mean appearance which it presented. Most of the houses were covered with red tiles, and were constructed without taste or elegance. Every thing looked miserable and wretched, while the beautiful scenery around seemed perfectly thrown away on the modern Antioch. The town appeared almost deserted, and

Digitized by Google

its streets were so still and silent that one might have imagined it to be the resuscitated form of the ancient city, raised, like Pompeii, from a sleep of centuries, and abandoned by all living beings except a few travellers or sight-seers. Much of its present desolate aspect, however, was occasioned by the terrific earth, quake, which took place here a few years ago, and obliged many of the surviving inhabitants to repair to Aleppo.

We took up our quarters at the house of a man, whose father had been the English agent, but our reception was any thing but hospitable. He complained that our Government had not recognized him as their representative, and therefore travellers of our nation had no right to expect that he would afford them any assistance. The Mutsellim, however, took a very different view of the matter, and ordered him to receive us, which after a long delay he did.

After dinner we went abroad to discover if we could search out any ancient remains; but in this we were perfectly unsuccessful. Every thing around was modern, except the river and those glorious mountains which had once looked proudly down upon the magnificent capital of the East.

We did not tarry long at Antioch, but continued our journey over the mountains, halting occasionally

Digitized by Google

in the valleys, and pitching our tent under the hospitable shades of the wide spreading walnut trees, which afforded a kindly shelter from the rays of a Syrian sun. The day after our departure, we toiled for half an hour up a steep and stony mountain path, which conducted us to the summit of a lofty eminence, from whence we beheld beneath the wide expanse of the beautiful Mediterranean, its numberless waves lit up by a thousand smiles. The sight excited powerfully our home feelings, and, to the great astonishment of our escort, we rose in our stirrups and saluted the sea with three loud cheers. Giorgio, who entered into our enthusiasm, remarked that it reminded him of the joy with which some of his countrymen had hailed a similar view in days of yore.

We continued our route, proceeding through avenues of trees, varied now and then by hedges of oleanders and bay myrtles, and crossing from time to time some rivulet or mountain stream, from whose clear waters we satisfied our horses' thirst and our own. At length we emerged from a mountain forest, and entered a large plain covered with verdure, at the extremity of which lay the town of Latakia, the ancient Laodicea, where we were hospitably received by the English consular agent, a Syrian Melekite.

We remained at Latakia two days, during which

Digitized by Google

time we were honoured by a visit from the Greek bishop and his priests. The Episcopal dignitary was a fine looking man, and was treated with the most marked deference by his clergy, who, on entering the room where he sat, prostrated themselves before him, and did not presume to join in the conversation till he had given them permission.

From Latakia, we hired an Arab boat to convey us to Beyrout, in which we embarked two days after our arrival, and sailed along the coast, having on our left the mountains of the Ansarey, who, like their neighbours the Druses, cultivate in their inaccessible retreats a mysterious and unknown worship. As we proceeded, we came in sight of the Lebanon range, its lofty summits being covered with monasteries and the castles of Druse and Maronite chieftains.

During the voyage, the sailors pointed out one of the former residences of the Emir Beschir, whom I had seen at Constantinople, a captive exile from his fair Syrian land. The Emir possessed some of the qualities which have constituted in all ages a great man. He was brave, politic, and unscrupulous: cared very little about the feelings or the lives of those who opposed him, and deceived everybody who placed any reliance on his promises. Alternately a Christian, a Mohammedan, and a Druse, he seems to

Digitized by Google

have been ready to assume any religion which enabled him to exercise sovereign power over the mountaineers. But the Emir soon found himself in a dangerous and precarious position between Lord Palmerston and Ibraheem Pasha. The siege of Acre followed, and the head of the house of Shehaab was compelled to abandon his sceptre, and to retire to an honourable banishment at Stamboul.* The Holy Land was again delivered over to the tender mercies of the Osmanli, and their hated sway quickly restored it to its former desolate and unsafe state. During the government of Ibraheem Pasha, a traveller could pass from Dan to Beersheba with a single attendant, or even alone; now, however, he can hardly stir six miles without a strong escort. These facts require no comment, but it may be as well to mention that the natives very generally lay all these calamities at our door. It

* It is but justice to observe that the character I have here given to the Emir of Lebanon is not founded on personal knowledge, but is that generally bestowed on him by Franks in the East. Having, however, some misgivings respecting information collected from the latter source, I must remark that my worthy friend, Madame Asmar, the authoress of the entertaining and instructive Memoirs of a Babylonian Princess, represents the Emir Beschir as a man of great piety, and as a well-meaning and persecuted prince, who entertained the deepest penitence for measures to which he had been led by motives of state policy. Madame Asmar's intimate knowledge of the Emir and his subjects claims for her statement some attention and more credit, perhaps, than the *on dits* of ignorant and prejudiced travellers.

Digitized by Google

seems the invariable policy of England to interfere in all the quarrels of other nations, to bring our self-constituted allies into greater trouble than they were in before, and to be abused by the persons whom our rulers supposed they were assisting and loading with benefits. Lord Palmerston and his measures are decidedly in bad odour among the inhabitants of Palestine, as where are they not in foreign parts.

We arrived safely at Beyrout, and found ourselves once more the tenants of an indifferent hotel, which though not so comfortable, gave, perhaps, more scope to the feeling of independence than the Oriental hospitality we had for so long a time experienced. From hence I repaired after a short stay in these parts to Malta, by way of Smyrna, and thus terminated my wanderings in the East.

And now kind, gentle, or courteous reader, for under all these names you have been addressed by those who wish you to read their books, allow me to thank you for having accompanied me so far in the Pilgrimage, whose details you have just been perusing You have traversed with me some of the most interesting regions of the earth, and I would fain indulge the vanity of supposing that you have not grown weary of my company. Old traveller as I am, I feel some compunction at parting with you, since our present

Digitized by Google

fire-side journey has served to recall many scenes and many friends who are now far away. In taking leave therefore, let me conclude with the wish so prominent in Eastern farewells. "Ma Salaam, may you depart with peace as your constant companion."

THE END.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY HARRISON AND SON, ST. MARTIN'S LANE.

Digitized by Google

13, *Great Marlborough Street.*

MR. COLBURN'S NEW BOOKS.

NEW WORK BY THE CELEBRATED JOHN EVELYN.

Just published, in 2 vols., post 8vo, price 21s. bound,

A RATIONAL ACCOUNT OF

THE TRUE RELIGION.

BY

JOHN EVELYN, F.R.S.,

Author of "Sylva," the "Diary," &c.

NOW FIRST PUBLISHED, BY PERMISSION OF W. J. EVELYN, ESQ., M.P., FROM THE ORIGINAL MS. IN THE LIBRARY AT WOTTON.

EDITED, WITH NOTES, BY THE REV. R. M. EVANSON, B.A.

"Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear."—1 PET. iii. 15.

THE recent republication of the Diary of the celebrated John Evelyn having directed attention to the manuscripts in the library at Wotton, the fruit of Evelyn's literary labours in a new and most important department is now for the first time brought to light. The work, which is entitled "A Rational Account of the True Religion," includes a condensed statement and investigation of its natural and Scriptural evidences. Suggested by the revolutionary changes, amid which he had passed his youth, and by the startling manifestations of infidelity that surrounded him in his more mature age, Evelyn, it appears, had undertaken this work to resolve in his own mind such occasional doubts as he might at any time have been moved to entertain; to satisfy himself on the various questions of religion; and to determine, once for all, what course to hold for the future. Considering the high literary reputation of the author, the extent and variety of his reading, the active benevolence of his character, and his well-known piety, the appearance of such a work at the present time is most opportune.

*** *For the Opinions of the Press on this work see the following pages.*

Digitized by Google

Scarcely could a moment have been chosen, more seasonable than the present, for the publication of this posthumous work of the Christian Philosopher of Wotton, whose personal character, coupled with his erudition and depth of thought, gives more than ordinary weight to anything written by him upon the all-important subject of religion. To hear, in the midst of the din and debate of modern controversy, a voice from the grave pronouncing upon the questions so much agitated in the present day, will be a surprise to all, and to many, we doubt not, a source of much comfort. The composition of the present work originated in the desire felt by the learned and pious author to satisfy his own mind concerning the foundations of his faith, at a period which must have proved one of intense trial and distress to every earnest mind. Evelyn took in hand to review the whole subject of religion, tracing it to its fountain-head, and scrutinising at every step the evidence on which it rests. In the former part of the work he enters deeply into the metaphysical questions connected with the being of a God and the immortality of the soul, indulging, by the way, in various speculations on the nature of angels and the order of the celestial hierarchy. He then takes a view of the different systems of the pagan world, its idolatries and its philosophy, and thence passes on to the history of revelation, discussing the evidences of the authenticity and inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, the sense of which, according to the interpretation sanctioned by universal tradition (ascertained by the test of Vircentius Livinensis), he acknowledges as the rule and standard of faith.

Having thus laid the foundation for revealed religion, the author considers in detail its different stages, the patriarchal, the Jewish, the Christian; and the decadence and corruption of the latter through the different sects and heresies which have sprung up in successive ages. Among these, on arriving at the sixteenth century, he reckons, without hesitation, the Council of Trent, Martin Luther, and John Calvin, along with the Presbyterians, Brownists, Independents, Anabaptists, Quakers, and Fifth-Monarchy men, as well as Socinians; but dwells with special emphasis and circumstantiality upon the corruptions of Popery. Lastly, he defines the Church Catholic, and concludes that "the Church of England, reformed from the corruption of the Romish Church, and restored to primitive purity, agrees and is in community with the true and ancient Catholic faith, wherever professed at this day."

While the views and principles advocated in these volumes are of a strict and decisive Church character, the tone of moderation, in which the cause of the Church is pleaded, and the systems of her opponents are criticised, is calculated to induce a fair and dispassionate examination of the points at issue; and the work is, therefore, one likely to contribute in no small degree, especially at the present day, to the healing of existing differences, and to the vindication of the principles of our Church, alike against Romish superstition and against latitudinarian unbelief.—*John Bull.*

We are disposed to rate most highly the value of this learned, pious, and most able treatise. In it, Evelyn anticipates all the arguments of Butler, Warburton, Waterland, Paley, and Magee. As an epitome of all the later arguments against the infidelity of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, the History of Religion is, indeed, invaluable.—*Standard.*

Digitized by Google

EVELYN'S "TRUE RELIGION."

Evelyn's preface to his "True Religion" is a piece of history as curious and valuable as anything contained in his "Diary." The manuscript would have been well worth publishing for this only. It opens with two contrasted pictures of society in the age wherein he lived, which throw out into singular prominence his own temperate, peaceful, gentle, and gentlemanly spirit. He shows us, first, the scenes that surrounded him in his youth. Day by day he saw society shaken to its foundations. Laws and establishments were subverted, princes were murdered, and churches robbed, by a party claiming to be godly; perjury was justified and rewarded, places of Christian worship were turned into stables, the universities were threatened, hypocrisy ruled in high places and in low, bishops and priests were pronounced anti-Christian, kingship was banished out of Israel, and the "soberest pretenders" countermined one another for possession of the supreme power. Such was England when Evelyn knew it first; and for all this, he adds, naïvely, "everything prospered which these men did." But he lived to have other experiences, and to exhibit the reverse of the picture. He lived to see Charles the Second brought back "in so stupendous a manner, as next to that of the Jews from Babylon, there is not to be found in history, sacred or profane, a more wonderful deliverance;" and then what followed? He tells us what he witnessed himself. He saw a people freed from hypocrisy only to become openly sensual, revengeful, and not so much as regarding a form of religion. He saw princes and great men, who ought to have been examples of virtue to others, abandoned to all manner of debauchery. He saw open and avowed adultery seated where sober hypocrisy had been, and, in place of "everything prospering which these men did," he saw on all sides national shame revenging the national vices. He saw bishops and priests restored only to be despised, and by their cowardly fear of denouncing such enormities, richly deserving the contempt that overwhelmed them. Such is the deliberate view of the Restoration taken by an enthusiastic friend of Royalty and the Church. Nor was it simply that "the gentry were dissolute, the theatres profane, the people libertine, and no face of sincere religion amongst us," but that there suddenly came up a man of great name, Mr. Hobbes of Malmesbury, who had the assurance to draw a grave philosophy out of all this, to deliberately make scepticism tolerable by making it decent, to encourage "raw and fantastical wits" in the delight of making sober mockery of the most venerable truths, to degrade religion into a mere engine of government while he affected to uphold its necessity, and to render it finally a greater reproach to *be* a Christian than not to be *called* one. Our grave, good Evelyn seems to have doubted at length whether his own footing would remain sure in the midst of this universal backsliding; and whether, seeing the great and polite ones of the world believed nothing at all of it, "what had been taught us concerning God, and religion, and honour, and conscience, were not in truth mere chimeras and impostures contrived by our forefathers—crafty men in their generation." To reassure himself against such doubts, and to extricate his spirit from many similar perplexities weighing upon it in that infidel age, he sat down to the composition of his "True Religion."

The fact of the existence of Evelyn's manuscript was not a secret to those who had examined his lists of published and unpublished works; but it is due to Mr. Colburn to relate, that it was mainly owing to his suggestions that the manuscript was carefully examined, and found to be a work of considerable learning and research. It is a specimen of the good old orthodoxy of our ancestors, represented by one of the noblest of English worthies.—*Examiner.*

Digitized by Google

Mr. Howitt's New Work.

Now ready, in 1 vol., with Illustrations, 10s. 6d. bound,

THE YEAR-BOOK OF THE COUNTRY;

OR,

THE FIELD, THE FOREST, AND THE FIRESIDE.

By WILLIAM HOWITT,

Author of "The Book of the Seasons," &c.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

"The world is always happy to hear from Mr. Howitt concerning 'the seasons and their signs'—the garden, the woodland, and their ever-changing shows of beauty—and the characters and humours which animate and chequer rural life. He treats of these topics with that affluence of poetical imagination and experience which there is no counterfeiting—with that thorough love which, coming from the heart of the writer, goes direct to the heart of the reader. The present volume is as fresh in spirit and as rich in matter as if it were the first of its family. The illustrations by Mr. Foster are excellent. The book is at once welcome to read and goodly to see. It is richly, poetically, picturesquely various. We cannot doubt of its having a welcome as wide as its range of contents, and as cordial as the love of man and of nature, which every line of it breathes."—*Athenæum.*

"To all lovers of country life we recommend this excellent volume, as abounding in thoughts and suggestions eminently calculated to enlarge the sphere of their enjoyment as well as their usefulness; and to all lovers of the town we recommend it as likely to reform their tastes, and awaken them to pure delights which they have not yet tasted. The work is a complete country companion for the whole year—in the field, in the forest, and at the fireside. It is divided into twelve sections, each of which relates to a particular month of the year, and not only describes all the natural features of the season, but the habits of life and customs appropriate to each."—*Morning Post.*

"A highly amusing book, supplying, from rural anecdote, description, and observation, something appropriate to each season. The illustrations are very beautiful."—*Standard.*

"A perfect transcript of rural life in all its phases. In every respect a most attractive book. Mr. Howitt paints nature as it is, and gives descriptions of its endless charms with an elegance of manner that wins its way with readers of every class."—*Messenger.*

"This very attractive and delightful work is evidently one written *con amore*. Mr. Howitt's productions have always displayed an intense, and, so to speak, elegant and cultivated love of Old England's rural beauties; and the present book will form an admirable companion to his 'Book of the Seasons.' In the present instance there is an abundant and interestingly applied variety of matter illustrative of human pleasures and pursuits in the country. A country life, indeed, is here seen in all its points of view—in the field, the forest, and by the fireside. It is curious to observe the variety of subjects treated of, either in prose or poetry, in these right pleasant and entertaining pages. The natural characteristics, peculiar customs, and usual avocations incident to each month in the year are described in a striking manner. Anecdotes, sketches of character, &c., are introduced with considerable skill and effect, adding much to the interesting nature of the book. The 'Autumnal Excursions' form some of the most attractive parts of the volume; and the legends scattered throughout are told with peculiar spirit and effect. Indeed, the work is altogether a charming one; and the illustrations, admirably engraved on wood, from exceedingly clever and pretty designs, by Mr. Birket Foster, are quite worthy of the pages in which they appear."—*Morning Advertiser.*

Digitized by Google

The Sovereignties of Europe.

Now ready, in 2 vols. 8vo, 28s. bound,

GERMANIA; ITS COURTS, CAMPS, AND PEOPLE.

By the BARONESS BLAZE DE BURY.

This work comprises a complete picture of the various courts, camps, and people of the Continent, as they appear amidst the wreck of the recent revolutions. The author possessed, through her influential connexions, peculiar facilities for acquiring exclusive information on the topics treated of. She succeeded in penetrating into provinces and localities rarely visited by tourists, and still glowing with the embers of civil war, and followed the army of Prussia in Germany, of Russia in Hungary, and of Radetzky in Italy. Her pages teem with the sayings and doings of almost all the illustrious characters, male and female, whom the events of the last two years have brought into European celebrity, combined with graphic views of the insurrectionary struggles, sketches of the various aspects of society, and incidents of personal adventure. To give an idea of the scope and variety of the contents of the work, it need only be mentioned that among the countries visited will be found Prussia, Austria, Hungary, Bavaria, Saxony, Servia, Styria, the Tyrol, Hanover, Brunswick, Italy, &c. To enumerate all the distinguished personages with whom the writer had intercourse, and of whom anecdotes are related, would be impossible; but they include such names as the Emperors of Austria and Russia, the Kings of Prussia, Hanover, Bavaria, and Wurtemberg, the Count de Chambord (Henry V.), the Queens of Bavaria and Prussia, the ex-Empress of Austria, the Grand Duke of Baden, the Archdukes John, Francis, and Stephen of Austria, Duke Wilhelm of Brunswick, the Prince of Prussia, Prince John of Saxony, the Countess Batthyanyi, Madame Kossuth, &c. Among the statesmen, generals, and leading actors in the revolutionary movements, we meet with Radowitz, Von Gagern, Schwarzenberg, Bekk, Esterhazy, the Ban Jellacic, Windischgratz, Radetzky, Welden, Haynau, Wrangel, Pillersdorf, Kossuth, Blum, Gorgey, Batthyanyi, Pulszky, Klapka, Bem, Dembinski, Hecker, Struve, &c.

"The acknowledged works of the Baroness Blaze de Bury, even before the appearance of 'Germania,' are quite sufficient to fix her in the first rank of modern European writers. Let us at once claim her as a countrywoman (her maiden name is Stuart), though she is the wife of an accomplished French nobleman. The baroness has lived long in France, and in a condition to observe minutely the progress of those European political movements of which Paris has been long the spring and the centre. The opportunity thus placed within the reach of the baroness has not been neglected; and, looking from the height of a very exact foreknowledge, she is able to give such a view of the last two years' movements in Europe such as few will be prepared for, such as we certainly did not anticipate. We gave to the fair authoress of 'Germania' full credit for extensive reading, for a sound critical judgment, and for a delicate taste; but we were not at all prepared for the masculine vigour, the bold excursiveness, and the graphic power which distinguish her latest work. In one word, all the grave reflection, all the gossip, and all the acquaintance with personal character that can be useful to the understanding of the perplexed story of European politics, will be found in 'Germania;' and all is clear and easy of comprehension. You have the whole history of the confluent revolutions of Prussia, Austria, Berlin, Italy, &c., &c., and the prominent characters are brought out with striking fidelity."—*Standard.*

Digitized by Google

The War in Hungary.

DEDICATED TO THE MARCHIONESS OF LANSDOWNE.

Now ready, in 2 vols., post 8vo., 21s. bound,

MEMOIRS OF

A HUNGARIAN LADY.

Comprising Full and Interesting Details of

THE LATE EVENTS IN HUNGARY.

By THERESA PULSZKY.

With an Historical Introduction by FRANCIS PULSZKY,
Late Under-Secretary of State to Ferdinand, Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

"The nationality of the people, their martial prowess, and present unhappy fate, have invested Hungary with the interest of a second Poland, and Western Europe must be naturally desirous to learn something of their civil and social life. These volumes are the joint production of M. and Madame Pulszky. While the latter records her impressions and recollections of Hungarian life, we have to thank M. Pulszky for a very able summary of the history of Hungary, from the days of Arpad to the reign of Ferdinand the First, and the reform movement—a history which abounds in interesting incidents and useful lessons for the statesman and the philosophic historian. Madame Pulszky's narrative of her wanderings and dangers is agreeably diversified with sketches and anecdotes from Magyar life, as well as with ancient legends from Hungarian history and modern passages in the late war of independence. It cannot fail to excite an interest in all classes of readers—in those who open a book only for amusement, as well as in those who look for something more enduring."—*Edinburgh Review.*

"We need hardly inform our readers that the authoress of this work is the accomplished wife of the gentleman who was originally accredited to the English cabinet by the provisional government of Hungary. The private interest attaching to the recital of events which have become so famous would insure a wide popularity for Madame Pulszky's book. But we should very much under-estimate its value if we so limited our praise. The memoirs, indeed, contain sketches of social life which are worthy of a place by the side of Madame de Staël de Launay and Madame Campan. But they are also rich in political and topographical information of the first character. Madame Pulszky was in the habit of direct intercourse with the foremost and most distinguished of the Hungarian generals and statesmen, and has given a complete summary of the political events in Hungary, from the arrival of the Hungarian deputation in 1848, to the treason of General Gorgey on the 13th of August, 1849. M. Pulszky has also prefixed a valuable introduction, which gives the most complete history of Hungary that has ever issued from the English press."—*Globe.*

"With all the charms of romance, these volumes possess the graver interest of history. Full of personal anecdotes, historical reminiscences, and legendary associations; teeming with interesting adventures, rich in social illustration and topographical description, the memoirs present to all classes of readers an attraction quite independent of the recent important events, of which they give so clear and connected a narrative."—*Morning Post.*

"In this most interesting book we have revealed in the characteristic memoirs of an eye-witness the whole story of Hungary and its revolution. The intrigues of Latour with Jellachich, the treachery of the court, the part taken by Kossuth and other eminent characters, the Hungarian deputation to the Emperor, and the final breach between Hungary and Austria, are told as forcibly as simply."—*Daily News.*

"It is impossible that the great Hungarian struggle for freedom can ever find a historian more honest in point of narrative, more sincere in conviction, or more anxious to do full justice to the truth, than Madame Pulszky."—*Observer.*

Digitized by Google

The New Work on Nineveh.

Now ready, in two vols., post 8vo., 21s. bound,

NARRATIVE OF A TWO YEARS'

RESIDENCE AT NINEVEH;

AND

TRAVELS IN MESOPOTAMIA, ASSYRIA, AND SYRIA,

WITH REMARKS ON THE CHALDEANS, NESTORIANS, YEZIDEES, &C.

By the Rev. J. P. FLETCHER, Minister of St. Saviour's Church.

These Travels embrace not only Nineveh and its antiquities, but various new and interesting particulars respecting the Yezidees, the Nestorians, and Oriental Christians, as well as notices of the country between Mosul and Aleppo, which has been explored by few European travellers. The intimate relations with the natives of the country entered into by Mr. Fletcher, who resided some years at Mosul, during his inquiries into the condition of the Oriental Churches, have furnished him with a vast fund of anecdote and illustration. The work also comprises disquisitions on the ancient cities of Mesopotamia, and on the successive empires established between the Tigris and Euphrates, with remarks on the hypothesis advocated by Major Rawlinson as regards the early Assyrian kings.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

"A work of great merit—the remarks of a highly intelligent and acute observer. The work is not less acceptable as a book of travel than it is valuable as an auxiliary to the archæology of the Holy Scriptures."—*Standard.*

"At a time when the startling discoveries of Mr. Layard have called public attention to the cradle of Asiatic civilisation, the notes of a two years' residence on the mighty plain of Nineveh, and of excursions into the remotest parts of Assyria, from the pen of another traveller, cannot fail to excite more than ordinary interest. Mr. Fletcher, well versed in the questions connected with the geography of Scripture, and with the history and position of the different Churches of the East, made his observations on the countries which he visited, not as an ordinary traveller who picks up his knowledge casually, here and there, but as an experienced student, who knows beforehand upon what points he is to direct his inquiries. His volumes form an instructive and agreeable pendant to Mr. Layard's more exclusively antiquarian researches. The reader will meet with much valuable information, which he would look for in vain elsewhere."—*John Bull.*

"A book which lets us more into the secret of the habits and ideas of the natives of Eastern Asia, more especially of the Christian population, than any work we could point out. Mr. Fletcher brings fresh and valuable information from that new centre of antiquarian research. He had the rare good fortune to be present at the first discoveries of M. Botta; and he is not without claims to be ranked as a discoverer himself. But his disposition and his opportunities make him a better describer of the living than of the dead. The circle of his inquiries was by no means confined to Nineveh, but extended to the whole Christian population of Asiatic Turkey, of whose habits, ideas, observances, and general condition he gives a minute, interesting, and, we are convinced, authentic account. The condition of the Eastern Churches is exciting much curiosity at present, and his detailed description of them will be most interesting to the religious world. Our extracts will sufficiently show what varied, interesting, and useful matter these volumes contain."—*Daily News.*

"Two volumes abounding in lively and graphic sketches of scenes visited and of characters encountered."—*Athenæum.*

"There is a great deal of original hypothesis and much gratifying information in these volumes. Mr. Fletcher is an acute observer, and a well-read historian. His work deserves to be popular, and cannot fail to increase our knowledge of the countries of which it treats."—*Evangelical Magazine.*

Digitized by Google

The War in Italy.

Now ready, in 2 vols., post 8vo, 21s. bound,

GENERAL PEPE'S NARRATIVE
OF THE WAR IN ITALY,
FROM 1847 to 1850; INCLUDING THE SIEGE OF VENICE.

Now first published from the original Italian Manuscript.

This important narrative comprises the most interesting particulars respecting the revolutions in Naples, Sicily, and Rome; the military operations of Charles Albert; and the siege of Venice, of which city General Pepe held the command. It also includes the details of the general's confidential communications and interviews with the Italian sovereigns, &c.

"The grand features of the recent Italian movement in favour of a national existence have had no other such authentic portraiture as these volumes convey. The State documents and letters which the work contains make it indispensable to the historian of these times. The whole panorama of the Revolution is here gone over—the reform movement beginning at Rome—the agitation caused thereby in Florence and Naples, thence spreading to Sicily, Piedmont, and Austrian Italy—the threats and hostile attitude of the Court of Vienna—the spirited revolt of the Sicilians—the increased tyranny of German generals in Lombardy—the crash of the Parisian Revolution—the rise of the populace of Milan against Radetzky—the declaration of Charles Albert, and advance of the Sardinian troops—the battle of Goito—the exultation of feeling in Rome and Florence—the flight of the Grand Duke of Tuscany—the Revolution in Naples—the treachery of Pope and King—the dreadful massacre in Naples—the disasters of Charles Albert—the bombardment of Brescia—the glorious defence of Venice—the flight of the Pope from Rome—the arrival of Mazzini—the proclamation of the Republic from the Capitol—the invasion of the Roman States by the armies of Spain, Austria, France, and Naples—the fall of Venice and of Rome—and the whole chain of events down to the Pontiff's return."—*Athenæum.*

"We predict that posterity will accept General Pepe as the historian of the great Italian movement of the nineteenth century. His work is worthy of all commendation. His style is animated and graphic, and the immense mass of matter which his volumes present (nothing less than the events of the two years of war universal in Italy and Sicily) is arranged without the least confusion, while the more interesting occurrences, such as battles, sieges, negotiations, &c., are described with a minuteness sufficient to satisfy the most curious military or diplomatic reader."—*Standard.*

LIGHTS AND SHADES OF MILITARY LIFE.

Edited by Lieut.-Gen. Sir CHARLES NAPIER, G.C.B., Commander-in-Chief in India, &c. 1 vol., 12s.

"A most agreeable work, replete with every charm."—HERALD.

"This work is crowded with light and sunny traits, and brings before us so graphic a picture of life in the various vicissitudes of military experience, that it is possessed of a fascination which has rarely before been imparted to such subjects. It gives us fresh views of the Soldier's life, and speaks out of the fulness of thought and knowledge."—ATLAS.

THE WANDERER IN ITALY, SWITZERLAND, FRANCE, AND SPAIN.

By T. ADOLPHUS TROLLOPE, Esq.

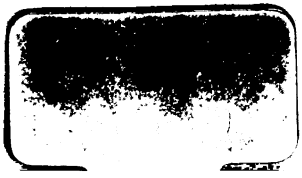
1 vol., 10s. 6d. bound.

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.—Venice—Rome—Florence—Zurich—Lucerne—Berne—Interlaken—Certaldo—Arles—Beziers—Toulouse—Pau—Orthez—St. Sebastian—Azpeitia—Saragossa—Jaca—Panticosa—Bayonne, &c.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google